

A EUROPEAN QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

A EUROPEAN TRADE UNION PROPOSAL



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With the support of
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FOREWORD

It is eight years now since the onset of the banking crisis, and Europe's economy has yet to recover. Overall economic growth in the European Union has been anaemic, at best, and the latest figures for the EU-28 show a real GDP growth rate of -0.5% for 2012, 0.2% for 2013 and 1.4% for 2014. Unemployment remains stubbornly high, and youth unemployment is extremely high, 22.2% for the European Union in 2014, and completely unacceptable, particularly in countries such as Spain (53.2%), Greece (52.4%), Croatia (45.5%), Italy (42.7%), Cyprus (35.9%) and Portugal (34.7%).

At its Congress in 2015 the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) reaffirmed its demand for a *New Path for Europe* with an investment programme of 2% of GDP per year for the next 10 years, to generate around 11 million quality jobs. Work-based and workplace learning should be top priorities for European countries, in order to facilitate the transfer of young people between education and training and the labour market, and to ensure that workers have access to continuing training so as to retain their jobs and improve their skills and careers. The quality of apprenticeship and traineeship schemes is a key element and should be improved, particularly in terms of training outcomes, working conditions and labour protection, and the ETUC strongly advocates the implementation of a wide-ranging European quality framework apprenticeship, with a common basis of quality standards.

On that basis it agreed to cooperate with BusinessEurope, UEAPME and CEEP, and launch an integrated project to contribute to the implementation of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. The aim of the ETUC project is to set up a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

Unionlearn, the education department of the Trades Union Congress, one of the ETUC's largest affiliated organisations and a co-applicant in the project, agreed to carry out a study which examines the latest developments in apprenticeship strategies at the national and European levels, gauges the contribution that EU education and training instruments make to supporting apprenticeship training and proposes a series of quality standards and quality criteria which would form the basis of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships. It also includes a short presentation of the latest developments in apprenticeship training in the 20 countries involved in the project and four European sectors.

In the last few years there has been a sudden realisation at the national and European levels that apprenticeship training needs to be developed to assist young people in their transition from school to the world of work, but the numbers of apprentices have continued to decline. We are witnessing a 'golden age' of interest in apprenticeship training strategy, but this needs to be turned into a 'golden age' of implementation of apprenticeship training strategy. Moreover, while there is an urgent need to improve the quantity of apprenticeship places, this should not be done at the expense of quality.

We would like to call upon the European Council and the European Commission:

- to propose a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships which includes a clear definition and a series of specific quality standards and quality criteria
- to ensure that the EU education and training instruments address the quality of apprenticeship training directly
- to launch an ambitious mobility initiative as part of the Erasmus+ Programme which would enable 1 million apprentices to study and work elsewhere in the European Union by 2020.

Many people have been involved in the development of this project. We would first like to thank our colleagues: Matt Creagh and Andy Moss, from Unionlearn, and Agnes Roman and Ruairi Fitzgerald from the ETUC, for their efforts in coordinating the project.

Thanks are due to all the colleagues from the ETUC Education and Training Committee who supported this initiative, organised programmes of interviews and provided fulsome comments on initial versions of the text: Tatjana Babrauskiene (LSPS, Lithuania), Isabel Coenen (FNV, Netherlands), Matt Creagh (TUC, United Kingdom), Eamon Devoy (ICTU, Ireland), Nikos Fotopoulous (KANEP/GSEE, Greece), Carlo Frising (CSL, Luxembourg), Francesco Lauria (CISL, Italy), Goran Lukic (ZSSS, Slovenia), Laurence Martin (FO, France), Isabelle Michel (FGTB, Belgium), Juan Carlos Morales (UGT, Spain), Nikos Nikolaou (SEK, Cyprus), Uli Nordhaus (DGB, Germany), Dorota Obidniak (OPZZ, Poland), Petr Pečenka (ČMKOS, Czech Republic), Ruta Pornice (LBAS, Latvia), Yuliya Simeonova (KNSB, Bulgaria), Gheorghe Simion (C.N.S.L.R.-FRĂȚIA, Romania), Morten Smistrup (LO – Denmark) and Kaja Toomsalu (EAKL, Estonia).

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1. APPRENTICESHIPS - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Apprenticeships have rarely received so much attention from policy makers. Faced with high levels of youth unemployment, politicians have rediscovered, or discovered for the first time, the benefits that apprenticeships can bring. In many EU Member States there have been significant developments recently to facilitate the transition from school to the world of work and more specifically to improve apprenticeship training.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Indeed there has been a flurry of activity throughout the European Union – amending and implementing recent legislation, setting up and carrying out review processes, developing new strategies to improve apprenticeship training systems, restructuring the administrative structures for implementing apprenticeship policy; and investigating ways of introducing apprenticeship systems or elements of apprenticeship systems.

Some Member States have amended and implemented recent legislation

In France amendments to the Labour Code were introduced in 2014 by the Vocational Training, Employment and Social Democracy Law which was itself based on a national multi-sectoral agreement signed by the social partners in December 2013. It introduced new opportunities for apprenticeship training institutions to provide career guidance and set out reforms for the financing of apprenticeships. In addition, it established the National Council for Employment, Vocational Training and Guidance, a tri-partite body with trade union participation, which is responsible for advising on legislative and regulatory projects relating to employment, vocational training and guidance; participating in the assessment of employment and training policies; and coordinating state agencies at national and regional levels and other employment stakeholders (social partners, local authorities, specialised bodies). In addition, speaking at the 3rd Grand Social Conference in 2014, the French President announced a series of measures to develop apprenticeship training, including a target of 500,000 apprentices by 2017.

In Belgium, in the French-speaking region, the Cooperation Agreement on Dual Training Act was amended in 2014 and again in 2015, with the aim of improving the quality of apprenticeships, clarifying and harmonising existing contractual arrangements, improving support for apprentices in training institutions and the workplace, facilitating progression between education and vocational training, and introducing a sliding scale for apprentices' pay. In addition, article 1 provides a new definition - 'vocational training which combines practical training at the workplace with training in a training institution in general and vocational subjects; it is based on a contract which is signed by a training institution, the apprentice and an employer and which stipulates the length of time to be spent in the workplace and in the training institution, the qualification obtained, entry requirements, mentoring, remuneration, and rights and obligations'.

In Belgium, in the Flemish-speaking region, the 2008 System for Learning and Working Act is under review, as is the Law for the Reform of Vocational Training in Luxembourg.

In Italy the 'Consolidated Act on Apprenticeships' has been gradually implemented, and a national catalogue of occupational profiles was compiled on the basis of collective agreements and professional standards defined at sectoral and/or regional levels. In 2015, the so-called 'Jobs Act' introduced changes designed to overcome the differences in regulation between regions, to move the focus from companies to public training institutions, thus strengthening aspects of school-based training, and to do away with age limits for professional apprenticeships for the unemployed.

In Spain the Royal Decree (2012), which provided for two types of work-based learning – contracts for training and apprenticeship on the one hand, and dual vocational training in the education system on the other, has been gradually implemented on the basis of a regulation from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (ESS/41/2015).

In Romania the Apprenticeship Law (2005) was amended in 2013 and defined an apprenticeship as 'an individual fixed-term contract of employment... according to which an apprentice is professionally obliged to learn and work for and under the authority of an employer who in turn is obliged to ensure the payment of wages and appropriate training conditions'.

Some Member States have set up and carried out review processes

In Ireland the Ministry for Education and Skills announced a review of apprenticeship training in 2013 and set up a steering group which was chaired by Kevin Duffy, the chairperson of the Irish Labour Court. *The Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland* proposed the following definition for an apprenticeship- 'a programme of structured learning which formally combines and alternates learning in the work place with learning in an education or training centre... whose completion prepares the participant for a specific occupation and leads to a qualification nationally recognised under the National Framework of Qualifications at any level from Level 5 upwards' (EQF Level 4).

It proposed that legislation for apprenticeships should be designed as an enabling framework providing for flexible delivery through a variety of modes and that it should not require apprenticeships to be individually designated by order placed before the Irish Parliament; an enterprise-led Apprenticeship Council should be established, with formal social partner (business and trade union) involvement; and there should be scope for the expansion of apprenticeships into new occupations. It also addressed issues, such as recruitment and registration, curricula, assessment, progression, incentives for employers, feedback mechanisms, labour market intelligence, branding and awareness campaigns, traineeships and EU Structural Funds and Resources.¹

The Apprenticeship Implementation Plan, published in June 2014, provides for the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council and a three-phase approach; renewing apprenticeships and identifying new opportunities; developing the proposals; and embedding the structures. It proposed the enactment of legislation to establish the Apprenticeship Council and underpin the new apprenticeship system for 2016.² In mid-2015 the decision was taken to add 25 new categories of apprenticeship in addition to the existing 27 in five sectors: construction, electrical work, engineering, motor mechanics and printing.

¹ Department for Education and Skills, *Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland*, Dublin, 2013, pp 6-15.

² Department for Education and Skills, *Apprenticeship Implementation Plan*, Dublin, 2014

The United Kingdom has a devolved framework for apprenticeship training, with different systems for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and in 2012 the Secretaries of State for Education and for Business, Innovation and Skills commissioned a review of apprenticeships in England.³ The Richard Review of Apprenticeships came up with a list of recommendations, some of which were turned into an implementation plan which defined an apprenticeship as ‘a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills’. It is underpinned by four principles:

- an apprenticeship is a job, in a skilled occupation
- an apprenticeship requires substantial and sustained training, lasting a minimum of 12 months and including off-the-job training
- an apprenticeship leads to full competency in an occupation, demonstrated by the achievement of an apprenticeship standard that is defined by employers
- an apprenticeship develops transferable skills, including English and maths, to progress careers.

In this new approach ‘apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers to meet their needs, and apprentices will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous, independent assessment designed with employers. Apprentices will be graded rather than simply passing or failing, and the English and maths requirements will be strengthened. All apprenticeships will need to last a minimum of 12 months to ensure quality and more will be done to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to both employers and potential apprentices’.⁴

‘Trailblazers’ - groups of employers – were set up to rewrite apprenticeship standards for the different occupations in their sector.

Subsequently the Prime Minister pledged to set a target of 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020 and to introduce an apprenticeship levy by April 2017.⁵ Moreover from September 2015, all bids for government contracts worth more than £10 million are required to demonstrate a clear commitment to apprenticeships. The government is also proposing to protect the term ‘apprenticeship’ by law, to prevent its potential misuse.⁶

Some Member States have developed new strategies to improve their apprenticeship training systems

In Germany the federal and regional governments and the social partners (trade unions and employers’ organisations) agreed a joint strategy ‘Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015-2018’ which contained a series of measures to prepare young people better for their occupations and the world of work. The business community pledged to provide 20,000 additional apprenticeship places in 2015 compared with the number of places reported to the Federal Employment Agency in 2014 and to provide young people with three offers of apprenticeship training if they did not have a contract by a certain point in the recruitment calendar (September). In addition the business community agreed to establish 20,000 ‘introductory training’ places a year as a bridge into apprenticeships. Moreover the social partners agreed to conduct joint activities to increase the proportion of young migrants participating in apprenticeship training. The partners to the Alliance also pledged to improve the attractiveness and quality of apprenticeships and in addition to strengthen advanced vocational training.

³ Richard D, *Richard Review of Apprenticeships*, schoolforstartups, London, 2012.

⁴ HM Government, *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*, London, 2013.

⁵ Department for Business Innovation and Skills, *Apprenticeship Levy – Employer Owned Apprenticeship Levy*, London, 2015

⁶ Department for Business Innovation and Skills, *Government Response to the Consultation on Protecting the Term ‘Apprenticeship’ from Misuse*, London, 2015

In Denmark, a new reform entitled *Improving Vocational Education and Training* was adopted in 2014, following discussions between the Government and the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations). It had four objectives:

- more young people should choose to start an apprenticeship immediately following form level 9 or 10⁷
- more young people should complete an apprenticeship
- apprenticeships should challenge all students so they may reach their fullest potential
- the trust and well-being in apprenticeships should be strengthened.

Each objective had a measurable indicator:

- at least 25% of young people should choose an apprenticeship immediately following form level 9 or 10, and this percentage should increase to at least 30 per cent by 2025
- the completion rate for apprentices should increase from 52% in 2012 to at least 60% by 2020 and at least 67% by 2025
- the percentage of the most gifted students – measured as the share of students who complete a total number of subjects at a level which exceeds the compulsory minimum level set by the vocational committees – should increase year by year, using the school year 2013/14 as a baseline, and the high employment rate for newly graduated apprentices should be maintained.
- the well-being of the apprentices and the satisfaction of the companies which hire the apprentices should gradually increase up until 2020.

In more practical terms the reform proposes the following:

- minimum entry requirement in Danish and mathematics would be introduced
- apprentices would have an opportunity to specialise more gradually, by reducing the twelve vocational access routes to four broader areas and by introducing a foundation course
- apprentices would have an opportunity to obtain a general upper-secondary qualification offering access to higher education.

Some Member States have restructured their administrative structures for implementing apprenticeship policy

In the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science handed over a central advisory role to a new foundation, 'Cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market' (*Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsopleiding Bedrijfsleven*, SBB in Dutch) in August 2015. The SBB is now responsible for labour market research, the development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies. In addition the number of single sector 'knowledge centres' has been reduced from 17 to 8 broader sector chambers – engineering and the built environment; mobility, transport, logistics and maritime; health care, welfare and sport; commerce; ICT and creative industries; food, agriculture and hospitality; business services and security; and specialist expertise. VET providers and social partners have equal representation on each sector chamber and on the board of the SBB.

In Cyprus the Council of Ministers agreed a new *Strategic Plan for Technical and Vocational Education and Training*, and from September 2015 responsibility for apprenticeship training was transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture, thus incorporating apprenticeship training into a national pathway programme.

⁷(for 16 and 17 year olds)

Some Member States have been investigating ways of introducing apprenticeship systems or elements of apprenticeship systems

In the other Member States that have been investigated in the context of this study, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, VET stakeholders have been engaged in discussing ways in which apprenticeship systems could be introduced. They have piloted a series of work-based training projects; they have discussed the legal steps required to amend existing legislation relating to education and training and/or the Labour Code; and they have set up projects and initiatives to be included in Operational Programmes on Human Resource Development for the 2014-2020 period.

CHALLENGES

Public authorities and social partners in many Member States have been actively examining ways in which they can improve their apprenticeship systems. Given the numerous challenges facing the different systems, it is high time.

Declining numbers

As has been seen above, the British Prime Minister, the French President and the German business community, for example, have pledged to increase the number of apprenticeship places. These pledges are timely, given the backdrop of declining numbers. In 2014/15 there were 494,200 apprenticeship starts in England, an increase on the figures for 2013/14, but a reduction on figures for 2012/13, 2011/2012 and 2010/11. In France there were 273,295 apprenticeship starts in 2013 (plus 9,440 in the public sector) – a reduction on the figures for 2012, 2011 and 2010. In Germany there were 522,232 apprenticeship starts in 2014, and this represents a year-on-year reduction down from 2009 (564,307).

In other Member States too, the number of apprentices is in decline. In Italy there were 451,954 apprentices in 2013, down on the figures for 2012, 2011 and 2010 (528,183). In the Netherlands there were 102,661 apprentices in 2014/5, a significant reduction, down from 167,091 in 2009/2010. In Luxembourg there were 4,084 apprentices in 2012-13, a reduction on overall figures for 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2009. In Ireland there were 2,698 apprenticeship registrations in 2014, an increase on 2012, 2011 and 2010, but far less than the figures for 2008 (3,765) and pre-crisis 2007 (6,763). In Denmark there were 69,669 in 2015, a reduction of 3% compared with 2014.

In Belgium the numbers have remained relatively constant, with 26,018 apprenticeships registered in 2013 (11,783 in Flanders and 14,235 in Wallonia), which bears witness to a relatively high level of overall stability since 2008. Only in Spain has there been an increase. In 2014 139,864 young people were engaged in contracts for training and apprenticeship and 16,199 participants in dual vocational training in the education system, up from a relatively low base - 106,101 and 60,584 for the former, and 9,801 and 4,292 for the latter, in comparison with 2013 and 2012 respectively. This increase can be explained by the developments following the implementation of the new Royal Decree.

Given that apprenticeship training by its very nature is a combination of school-based and work-based training, a major challenge is clearly the state of the labour market which itself is dependent upon development in the broader economy. Gross Domestic Product in the European Union fell by 4.4% in 2009 in terms of the previous year, grew a little in 2010, 2011, declined in 2012, and then grew marginally in 2013 and 2014. The levels of growth vary from one Member State to another, with some being hit very hard, but the important point is that the general mood in the economy during this period did not lend itself to expansion and a readiness on behalf of employers to take on responsibilities for new employees, and this includes new apprentices.

One of the essential strengths of apprenticeship training is the experience gained at the workplace, but this turns into a glaring liability in times of economic stagnation, because apprentices are not taken on in the first place. The situation is exacerbated in times of economic decline,⁸ when apprentices are laid off. In a worst case scenario, for example in Ireland, apprentices were made redundant, requiring FÁS, the former Training and Employment Authority and forerunner of SOLAS, to set up the Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme (RAPS) which enabled 2,250 redundant apprentices to progress their apprenticeships.⁹

Under-representation of young women and young people from ethnic minorities

As regard the number of apprenticeship places, or rather the beneficiaries of the apprenticeship places, there is another, different, challenge – the under-representation of certain groups of young people. Latest figures show that young women are in a minority, with one exception – England, with 53%. Young women make up 43% in Italy, 40.1 % in Germany, 37% in the Netherlands, 33.7% in France, between 20 and 30% in Belgium, and an extremely low 0.5% in Ireland. The English figures present another challenge however - 'there appears to be a gender balance in apprenticeships overall, in reality men and women train in markedly different sectors, reflecting and emphasising occupational segregation in the workforce generally. Women are significantly under-represented in high-quality sectors such as engineering (less than 4%), while men are under-represented in low-pay sectors such as the children's and young people's workforce (6.9%)'.¹⁰ Another under-represented group is made up of young people from ethnic minorities; where data is collected and available, for example in England, 7.8% of apprentices are classified as Total Asian/Asian British or Total Black/African/Caribbean/Black British.

Mismatch of supply and demand

Linked to the question of apprenticeship statistics is the correlation between the supply and demand of apprenticeship places. Where figures are available, in Germany for example, 522,231 young people obtained apprenticeship places in 2014, but 603,240 were looking for apprenticeship places, a mismatch of 81,099. Moreover, from another perspective, there is evidence that German companies cannot fill apprenticeship places; 37,101 vocational training places remained unfilled in 2014, notably, for example, for restaurant specialists, butchers, plumbers, salespersons specialising in foodstuffs and bakers. There may be perfectly understandable reasons for this mismatch, geographical proximity for example, but it serves to illustrate a fundamental point for all apprenticeship systems – how can employers find apprentices, and vice versa?

Central to the issue of supply is the readiness of companies to offer apprenticeship places, and here we see in Germany, for example, that the number of companies offering training places continues to fall, down to 437,721 in 2013, and most markedly in very small companies.

⁸ Although Eurostat does not produce statistics on bankruptcies as such, an average of 200,000 firms went bankrupt each year in the EU, resulting in direct job losses totalling 5.1 million over three years, according to a Commission Staff Working Document *Impact assessment accompanying the document Commission Recommendation on a New Approach to Business Failure and Insolvency* {C(2014) 1500 final} {SWD(2014) 62 final}

⁹ Foras Áiseanna Saothair, *Annual Report 2012*, Dublin, 2013, p 9

¹⁰ Newton, B & Williams, J, *Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research summary*, Unionlearn, London, 2013, p 3.

Completion/premature termination and retention (transition to work) rates

There are two other quantitative issues which are qualitatively illustrative and pose significant challenges to the success of an apprenticeship system – completion/premature termination rates on the one hand and retention (transition to work) rates on the other.

As seen above, one of the objectives of the Danish reform entitled *Improving Vocational Education and Training* is that more young people should complete an apprenticeship and that the completion rate for apprentices should increase from 52% in 2012 to at least 60% by 2020 and at least 67% by 2025. This means that in 2012 48% of apprentices started but never finished their apprenticeships. In Luxembourg for those apprentices who started in 2010-11 70.3% of them did not obtain their qualification. In France the non-completion rate for apprenticeship contracts signed in 2011-2012 was 27%. In Germany the figure stands at 25% for 2013 and has increased marginally every year since 2009. In England research has shown that 82% of employers reported that all their apprentices who finished training between August 2011 and March 2012 had completed their apprenticeships, so 18% did not. In Ireland the attrition rate for apprentices that registered in 2012 was 17%.

Whilst young people may have perfectly understandable reasons for changing direction, and indeed this does not automatically mean that they are lost to the IVET system or the labour market, this shortcoming nevertheless points to a weakness and a misallocation of time and resources, both for the young persons involved and for the system as a whole. It begs the question – did the young people receive adequate and timely career guidance from experienced and qualified career advisers, both before and during their apprenticeship so as to make the appropriate informed choices?

Good retention (transition to work) rates are generally a hallmark of the apprenticeship system. A recent study published by the European Commission has concluded that ‘our analysis by country has shown that apprenticeships have consistently yielded positive employment outcomes and not only in countries typically associated with the dual training system like Germany and Austria’.¹¹ This holds also for the Member States with apprenticeship systems that were the subject of this study. In Germany two thirds of apprentices who finished in 2013 were kept on by their employers. In France 67% of apprentices were in employment seven months after finishing their apprenticeship in 2013. In Luxembourg 81% of apprentices were in employment within three years after finishing their apprenticeships. In England the mean retention rate has been estimated at 73%. In the Netherlands 95% of apprentices were in paid employment 18 months after finishing their apprenticeships. In Italy around 161.000 apprentices were hired permanently at the end of their contracts in 2012 (although this is a reduction of 10.8% compared to 2011). In Spain however latest figures show that the rate for transition from contracts for training and apprenticeship to an open-ended (indefinite) work contract is a mere 2%.

With the glaring exception of Spain these figures are positive. What they demonstrate again however, is the vulnerability of the apprenticeship system to poor economic performance and weak labour market conditions. It points to another concern however. Retention (transition to work) rates are often considered as an indicator of quality for apprenticeship systems, but the best apprenticeship systems in the world cannot produce a high level of transition to the labour market, if there are no jobs available.

¹¹ European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors*, 2013, p 2

Further quality issues

Apprenticeships systems are faced with the challenge of quantity, places, but also with the challenge of quality. The trade union stakeholders that have been consulted in the context of this study understand the preoccupation with quantity in terms of apprenticeship places, but consider that this should be accompanied by a similar level of commitment to quality, for which readily understood quality standards and measurable criteria are required.

According to trade union stakeholders, apprenticeship systems should definitely cater for the needs of the labour market and thus increase transition to work rates, but they should also ensure that apprentices obtain good pay and working conditions, a safe working environment, and personal development and career opportunities. They should provide opportunities for all, including under-represented groups such as women and young people from ethnic minorities. To ensure that apprentices complete their apprenticeships and that non-completion rates are low, there is a need to provide appropriate guidance and counselling, particularly before, but also during the training process. There should be good quality training in the workplace, with in-company mentors trained for this purpose, linked closely to good quality training in training institutions, with qualified teachers and trainers that have up-to-date and appropriate knowledge and skills. Apprenticeships should be certified by competent bodies to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competences lead to qualifications that are recognised professionally within the labour market and facilitate progression through the education and training system.

These are subjects which will be investigated in greater depth in the final part of this publication which is devoted to the presentation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

2. APPRENTICESHIPS - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

In the late 1990s there was some clear interest shown at the European level in the subject of apprenticeships. In 1997 the European Commission Communication *Promoting Apprenticeship in Europe* set out five recommendations:

- extending and developing apprenticeships, particularly in growth sectors and emerging job categories, and identifying good practice in this area
- enhancing the quality of training through closer cooperation between educational establishments and companies, and between teaching and training staff
- encouraging mobility for apprentices, notably through the development of a common reference framework to encourage apprenticeships in Europe and of a mobility programme for apprentices along the lines of the Socrates/Erasmus programmes
- involving the social partners and increasing the debate on apprenticeship within the context of social dialogue
- adopting genuine apprenticeship strategies.

Five years later the Ministers of Vocational Education and Training launched a new process, the Copenhagen Process, to enhance European cooperation in vocational education and training. This has been followed by regular meetings, with the participation of the European social partners. In the Maastricht Communiqué (2004) there was no specific mention of apprenticeships. The Helsinki Communiqué (2006) declared that Europe needs investments in vocational education and training, and that young people in VET should acquire skills and competences relevant to labour market requirements, for employability and for lifelong learning. This would require policies to reduce drop-out rates from VET and to better facilitate school-to-work transition, e.g. by combining education and training with work through apprenticeships and work-based learning. The Bordeaux Communiqué (2008) called for the improvement of links between VET and the labour market and proposed to increase the mobility of people undergoing work-related training, by strengthening the existing Community programmes in support of mobility, in particular for apprentices. The Bruges Communiqué (2010) proposed a number of actions at the national level for the period 2011-2014, including: making the necessary arrangements to maximise work-based learning, including apprenticeships, in order to contribute to increasing the number of apprentices in Europe by 2012; taking appropriate measures to boost mobility in VET, by addressing legal and administrative obstacles related to the transnational mobility of apprentices and trainees. In addition, it called for support at the European level to promote mobility for apprentices, including by means of a support portal, within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme/ Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The Riga Conclusions (2015) proposed to promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers, reviewing or introducing apprenticeships in the context of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and by integrating apprenticeships provided under Youth Guarantees in to national systems.

Progress to achieve the objectives of the original European Commission proposal has generally been unhurried.

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

The pace has quickened however.

In July 2013 the European Alliance for Apprenticeships was launched on the basis of a declaration signed by the Presidency of the European Union (on behalf of all Member States), the European Commission and the European Social Partners – the European Trade Union Confederation, BusinessEurope, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services.

They committed themselves to:

- consider our common commitment and mutual trust as a precondition for the launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships
- contribute to the access to, supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships across the EU by encouraging the setting up, reviving or modernising of apprenticeship schemes that follow the following principles:
 - a. effective partnerships between education and training institutions and enterprises, and the recognition of their respective roles
 - b. involvement of social partners, and, as appropriate, intermediary bodies such as chambers of commerce, industry and crafts, professional organisations, sectoral organisations in the governance of apprenticeship systems
 - c. high quality of the qualifications and learning process
 - d. integration of apprenticeship schemes into national/regional education and training systems and a clear regulatory framework, clarifying the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved, in the context of national practices, labour law and collective agreements
- contribute to changing mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning by promoting the benefits of apprenticeship systems.

In addition they invited relevant stakeholders to join this process by committing through pledges to concrete activities that support the aims of the Alliance.

For their part the European Social Partners pledged to channel their contribution through actions to be undertaken by national social partners in the context of their follow-up of the Framework of Actions on youth employment, including specific actions on apprenticeships and the Youth Guarantee. They agreed to focus their efforts on the following fields of action:

- a. undertaking 'capacity building' in their own constituencies, spreading experience and good practice among the national member organisation;
- b. motivating, advising and challenging member organisations to support the aims of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships by getting involved in the establishment and improvement of apprenticeship systems
- c. motivating, advising and challenging enterprises to support the aims of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships
- d. raising awareness of employers and of young people of the benefits of apprenticeships
- e. disseminating information and supporting social partner action to ensure more attractive conditions for enterprises and apprentices and proper use of apprenticeships in compliance with applicable rights and obligations
- f. promoting the use of the EU funds, in particular the European Social Fund, to introduce or improve Member States' dual-learning apprenticeship systems.

For its part the European Commission agreed to focus its efforts on a series of specific actions for steering the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

Later on in the year the Council of the European Union, which is composed of representatives of all EU Member States, adopted a significant declaration as regards European Alliance for Apprenticeships. It concluded that 'high-quality apprenticeship schemes can make a positive contribution to combating youth unemployment by fostering skills acquisition and securing smooth and sustainable transitions from the education and training system to the labour market. Such schemes are particularly effective when embedded in a comprehensive approach at national level that combines education, training and employment measures'.

It continued - 'the effectiveness and attractiveness of apprenticeship schemes should be encouraged by their adherence to several common guiding principles', and is worth quoting in full, because these guiding principles will be revisited in the final part of this publication which is devoted to the presentation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships, as follows:

- a.** establishing an appropriate regulatory framework, whereby the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved are clearly formulated and are enforceable.
- b.** encouraging national partnerships with social partners in the design, implementation and governance of apprenticeship schemes, together with other relevant stakeholders such as, where appropriate, intermediary bodies (chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, professional and sectorial organisations), education and training providers, youth and student organisations, and local, regional as well as national authorities.
- c.** ensuring adequate integration of the apprenticeship schemes into the formal education and training system through a system of recognised qualifications and competences which may allow access to higher education and life-long learning.
- d.** ensuring that the qualifications and competences gained and the learning process of apprenticeships are of high quality with defined standards for learning outcomes and quality assurance, in line with the Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, and that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs.
- e.** including a strong work-based high-quality learning and training component, which should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, ensuring that participants can adapt to change after finishing the apprenticeship.
- f.** involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available.
- g.** covering multiple sectors and occupations, including new and innovative sectors with a high employment potential, and taking into account forecasts of future skills needs.
- h.** facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by providing career guidance, preparatory training and other targeted support.
- i.** promoting apprenticeship schemes through awareness-raising targeted at young people, their parents, education and training providers, employers and public employment services, while highlighting apprenticeships as a pathway leading to excellence which opens up broad educational and professional opportunities, including apprenticeships as one of the options for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee schemes.¹²

¹²The Youth Guarantee scheme was set up by European Council in April 2013. It recommends that Member States should 'ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education' *Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01)*

Parallel to this, as part of the European Semester, the annual cycle of economic policy guidance which was established in 2011, the European Council has adopted a series of Country-specific Recommendations on the subject of apprenticeships. In 2015, for example, it proposed reforms, inter alia, to increase participation in vocational education and training, and its labour market relevance, in particular by improving the availability of apprenticeships (for Estonia), and to address skills mismatches by increasing employers' engagement in the delivery of apprenticeships (for the United Kingdom).¹³

The German government has been engaged in a form of multilateral and bilateral apprenticeship diplomacy. Germany, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Slovakia and Latvia, in association with the European Commission, signed the 'Berliner Memorandum' which includes concrete measures for introducing a vocational education system based on Germany's model of dual training. For the initial phase, the participating countries agreed to launch a series of exchanges and study trips, set up regional vocational training networks, establish consultancy projects, on the basis of funding primarily from the German government.¹⁴ In addition Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Denmark are engaged in producing a series of instruments to help implement dual training principles. As part of this process the German Trade Union Confederation has set up a project UNIONS4VET, with its counterparts in Portugal, Italy, Greece, Slovakia and Latvia, to strengthen the cooperation of trade unions in the field of vocational education and training, and particularly apprenticeships.

IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

The Member States declared that they would make a pledge that describes their intended actions to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships and undertake VET system reforms, in cooperation with social partners and other relevant stakeholders. This would be achieved by introducing an apprenticeship pathway or improving existing schemes, in line with the guiding principles, in order to increase the number, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships. All EU Member States, with the exception of Portugal and the United Kingdom, signed pledges. They were joined by Albania, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

Just over a hundred stakeholders responded to the invitation to make a pledge to support the aims of the Alliance. This is an interesting first step but clearly has not captured the imagination of thousands and thousands of employers, trade unions, training providers, professional chambers and regional authorities that are involved in the development and implementation of apprenticeship strategies on a daily basis.

Five sets of European social partners have signed joint statements – the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the European Construction Industry Federation; the European Trade Union Committee for Education and the European Federation of Educational Employers; the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions and FoodDrinkEurope; the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism and HOTREC; UNI Europa and EuroCommerce. A number of individual employers' organisations, chambers of commerce, trade unions and training providers have also signed pledges.

Pledges were also signed by a number of multinational companies, such as AXA, BASF, BMW Group, Bosch Cisco Systems, Iberdola, Nestlé, Repsol, Siemens and ScottishPower.

¹³ For more details, see http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm and Clauwaert S, *The country-specific recommendations (CSRs) in the social field*, ETUI, Brussels, 2015

¹⁴ On the initiative of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, the German Office for International Cooperation in VET, GOV-ET, was set in September 2013 up to coordinate these activities. An initial indication of its first results can be found in Schreier C, *Success and limitations in the trial of dual education and training forms in Europe*, <https://www.bibb.de/en/37031.php>. For further information about one example of this cooperation, see Ulmer, P, Müller, H-J, and Pires, F, *Continuing vocational teacher training for company-based tutors – a German-Portuguese pilot project*, BIBB, BWP, 4/2015.

Some of the pledges are statements of political support. Some refer specifically to work-based learning in general but not apprenticeships in particular. Some contain concrete and measurable actions to provide apprenticeships, particularly from German companies that already run large-scale apprenticeship schemes in their own country. BASF, for example, which employs 2,892 apprentices in Germany, pledges to provide dual vocational training for 20 Spanish students with a minimum age of 18 in Spain and Germany and plans to offer employment to the students who successfully complete their apprenticeships at its production site in Ludwigshafen, Germany. Bosch, which expects to recruit 1,600 apprentices in 2016, pledges to train 100 young people from southern Europe (Italy, Portugal and Spain), half of whom will be trained in Bosch subsidiaries in their native countries, while the other half will be offered apprenticeships in Germany, more specifically, at Bosch Group companies in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

The most eye-catching pledge is provided by Nestlé's, which plans to increase the number of high quality apprenticeships and traineeships by 50% over a 3-year period to 10,000. Another initiative was launched in November 2015 - *the European Pact for Youth*, which intends to create 10,000 business-education partnerships over the next two years that will lead to at least 100,000 good quality apprenticeships, traineeships or entry-level jobs. With these two proposals however it is not yet clear what the respective figures will produce in terms of apprenticeships.

From a social partners perspective, the European Trade Union Confederation published a study *Towards a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning*,¹⁵ its Executive Committee agreed a resolution supporting apprenticeship training and the introduction of a series of quality standards (2014);¹⁶ it encouraged affiliated organisations to sign pledges, and it launched a social dialogue project with the European employers' organisations which included a research activity – the basis for this study.

For its part, the European Commission set up a Working Group on Vocational Education and Training, whose focus was to benefit the Member States in their work of furthering policy development on Vocational Education and Training through mutual learning and the identification of good practice. It concluded its first phase of activities with the publication of a booklet *High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles*.¹⁷ These guiding principles will be referred to, where appropriate, in the final part of this publication which is devoted to the presentation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

NEXT STEPS

All in all, this adds up to a wide-ranging strategy. There still however remains much to be done to develop the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and by extension apprenticeship training in Europe. Most trade unionists consulted for this study were completely unaware of its existence. A first step would be to improve the dissemination of information about the Alliance. More effort and resources will clearly be required: to raise awareness about the Alliance; to point out its added value; to provide for the exchange of ideas about ways in which the Alliance can be used; to demonstrate its impact in terms of the development of apprenticeship programmes and the potential reduction of youth unemployment.

A second step would be to underpin it with a specific programme for apprentice mobility, one to match what has already been provided for university students. Thousands and thousands of university students

¹⁵ <https://www.etuc.org/issue/education-and-training-lifelong-learning>

¹⁶ <https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-resolution-improving-quality-apprenticeship-and-work-based-learning#.VsYCGuZWXVI>

¹⁷ These 'guiding principles' however did not refer to or correspond to the 'guiding principles' that were agreed by the Council of the European Union.

have benefitted from mobility programmes, whereas the figures for apprentices are very modest, and so a call has been made by the Jacques Delors Institute to set up a new ambitious programme 'Erasmus Pro' targeted specifically at apprentices. The aim would be to enable one million European apprentices to gain a professional qualification, or part of a professional qualification, in a different European country by 2020.¹⁸

A significant question remains. What will be the reference point for monitoring the pledges made by Member States, other stakeholders and future stakeholders; for launching a clear and well-focused 'Erasmus Pro' programme; for measuring the success of the Youth Guarantee scheme; for achieving the objectives of Country Specific Recommendations; or indeed for gauging the level of support that EU education and training instruments could possibly offer - the subject of the next section?

Clearly there is a need for a common understanding of the term 'apprenticeship'. It is not a synonym for 'work-based-learning', as is sometimes the case, but one of the three forms of work-based learning, according to a publication of the European Commission – the other two being;

- work-based learning as school-based VET which includes on-the-job training periods in companies
- work-based learning integrated in a school-based programme, through on-site labs, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry project assignments.¹⁹

In short, an apprenticeship is a form of work-based learning, but not all work-based learning is an apprenticeship.

A starting point has been provided by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, which has proposed the following:

- systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training institutions. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.²⁰

To bring this definition up to speed with the latest developments in National Qualifications Frameworks and the European Qualifications Framework, which will be one of the elements investigated in the next section, it would however need to include a reference to acquiring a recognised qualification.

¹⁸Delors J, Enderlein H, Lamy P, Letta E, Villeroy de Galhau F, Vitorino A, Baer J-M, and Fernandes S, *Erasmus Pro: for a million Young European Apprentices* by 2020, 2015

¹⁹European Commission, *Work-based learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*, 2013, pp 5-7.

²⁰Cedefop, *Terminology of European education and training policy - A selection of 100 key terms*, Thessaloniki. 2011. p 11.

3. EU EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTRUMENTS - SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIPS?

The European Union has zealously adopted a number of education and training instruments recently. The aim of the first part of this section is to present these instruments briefly and examine them in the light of the different formal evaluation exercises that have been carried out, in order to gauge the level of direct support they may provide for apprenticeships and the level of trade union involvement in any implementation processes. The final part of this section will present the views of European trade union organisations and also trade union officers working at the national level as regards the contribution that these EU instruments may, or may not, make to the development of apprenticeship strategies.

The EU instruments that have been considered the most appropriate for this study are quite diverse, as follows: Europass; the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET); and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

When presenting this subject it is important to point out that education and training policy is not the competence of the European Union, but of the Member States. However the European Union implements a vocational training policy designed to support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training. (Article 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Decisions on education and training policy are generally taken on the basis of Recommendations which, although not legally binding, have a certain political authority, in the sense that Member States' governments agree jointly and formally to carry out certain activities within the context of a broad policy initiative.²¹

EU EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTRUMENTS

Europass

Member States agreed in 2004 to establish a single Community framework for achieving the transparency of qualifications and competences by means of a personal, coordinated portfolio of documents, to be known as 'Europass', which can be used to communicate and present information about qualifications and competences throughout the European Union. It was decided that a National Europass Centre would be set up in each Member State to coordinate all the activities related to the Europass documents.

According to the Decision, social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) have 'an important role' to play and should be involved in its implementation. It was agreed that the social partners at European level and other relevant stakeholders would have a particular role in terms of transparency initiatives that could be incorporated into Europass in due course.²²

²¹ The exception is the Decision to set up Europass.

²² *Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass).*

Europass now consists of two sets of documents that may be completed by European citizens (the Curriculum Vitae for the presentation of skills and qualifications; and the Language Passport, a self-assessment tool for languages skills and qualifications) and three others that may be issued by education and training authorities (the Europass mobility for recording knowledge and skills acquired in another European country; the Certificate Supplement for describing knowledge and skills acquired by holders of VET certificates; and the Diploma Supplement for describing knowledge and skills acquired by holders of higher education degrees).²³

Europass is well placed in theory to provide direct support for apprentices interested in studying and/or working in another country. According to the Europass website more than 50 million CVs were created online in the period 2005-2015. The most recent evaluation of Europass, which was published in 2013, noted that it had been 'very effective over the period between 2008 and 2012 for end-users, in terms of the increased usage and awareness of Europass documents' in general.

However there are very few references to apprenticeships in the evaluation as such, and although an increase in the use of Europass documents by traineeships/apprenticeships was noted, there was no indication of the numbers involved, nor the share for each category.

The evaluation notes that Europass is distant from end-users, and this prompted the recommendation that National Europass Centres should work further to strengthen their co-operation with all key stakeholders, but particularly associations of employers and trade unions, by offering personal guidance so as to enable and support their roles in implementing and promoting Europass documents.

A further more general point was the potential for confusion among stakeholders and end-users as a result of growing 'initiative fatigue', resulting from the introduction of different initiatives with similar purposes, names or target groups. This prompted a recommendation that 'the complementarity of European online tools related to transparency of qualifications and skills and to fostering mobility could be strengthened further'.²⁴ In order to shed some light on this issue, there will be examples of the potential for complementarity between the different instruments, in tabular form, at the end of this section.

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Member States agreed in 2008 to develop a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which aims to create a common reference framework. This would serve as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels, for general and higher education and also vocational education and training. The idea being to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of citizens' qualifications throughout the European Union.

It was agreed that Member States would relate their national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010, in particular by referencing the qualification levels in their own national frameworks to EQF levels. In practice this meant for the majority of Member States that they would have to take another significant preliminary step – to develop their own national qualifications frameworks. In addition they agreed to adopt measures, so that, by 2012, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and 'Europass' documents issued by their competent authorities would contain a clear reference, by way of their own national qualifications systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

The EQF consists of eight reference levels which are defined in terms of learning outcomes - what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. They are defined in terms of

²³ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home>

²⁴ European Commission, *Second Evaluation of Europass – Final Report*, 2013, pp 77,78

knowledge, skills and competence: knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual; skills are described as cognitive and practical; and competences are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.²⁵ In the Recommendation, social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) would have a role to play. Member States agreed to promote the participation of all relevant stakeholders including social partners, on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.²⁶

The evaluation of EQF was published in 2013 and so only five years after the formal adoption of the Recommendation. It noted that four countries had related their national qualifications systems to the EQF by the end of 2010 and six had ensured that all new qualification documents refer to the appropriate EQF level by the end of 2012.²⁷ However considerable intermediate progress had been made in all Member States subsequently, and by the end of 2014 23 Member States had referenced their national qualifications framework to the EQF.²⁸

No mention is made of apprenticeships as such in the evaluation, as they are presumably subsumed under vocational education and training. However it is worth mentioning that only apprenticeship training that is formally recognised is classified in a qualifications framework. Apprenticeship training that provides access to certain occupations on the basis of an agreement between social partners is not formally recognised and so does not form part of the national qualifications framework.

The evaluation notes that stakeholders' awareness and understanding of the EQF and its national implementation is high among direct qualifications stakeholders (insiders, i.e. those directly involved in the EQF and NQF development, such as national authorities in charge of education and/or training, qualifications authorities and – to a lesser extent – representatives of social partners). Awareness is much lower among other groups, such as the large majority of social partners, education and training providers. This in turn prompted the recommendation that the Commission should support activities aiming to increase stakeholders' awareness, understanding and interest in the EQF and that social partners should be considered a priority target group.²⁹

Another noteworthy point is that, as can be seen from the country summaries in Appendix 2 of this booklet, apprenticeships are classified at different levels in national qualifications frameworks. There may be perfectly reasonable explanations for this. However, if the learning outcomes for apprenticeships are similar from one country to another, but the qualifications are classified at different levels in the different national qualifications frameworks, this brings the EQF into disrepute.

European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

Member States agreed in 2009 to set up a European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training and to adopt measures for the purpose of the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals learning outcomes achieved in formal and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts.

They also agreed to support the development of national and European partnerships and networks involving institutions and authorities responsible for qualifications and diplomas, VET providers, social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) and other relevant stakeholders dedicated to trialing, implementing and promoting ECVET.³⁰

²⁵ [https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f\[0\]=im_field_entity_type%3A97](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f[0]=im_field_entity_type%3A97)

²⁶ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01)2013

²⁷ ICF GHK, *Evaluation of the Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation Final Report*, 2013

²⁸ Cedefop, *Qualifications Frameworks in Europe, Briefing Note*, Luxembourg, 2016

²⁹ Op cit, p 70

³⁰ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/02)

ECVET aims primarily to support labour mobility throughout the EU by making it easier for citizens to obtain the validation of vocational knowledge and skills acquired in one Member State and have these knowledge and skills recognised in another.

ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points, a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements, transcripts of records and ECVET Users' Guides.³¹

ECVET is in theory well placed to provide support for apprentices that are interested in studying and/or working abroad and ensuring that their experience abroad is validated and transferable. However the recent evaluation of ECVET, which was published in 2014, concluded starkly that 'no impact that ECVET may have had with reference to its objectives has been detected' and that in terms of relevance 'a majority of stakeholders across all groups (public actors, social partners, providers, researchers/academia) were not satisfied with ECVET progress at the national level.'³²

Apprenticeships are referred to in the evaluation, but in an indirect way. Member States were divided into 4 different clusters, as follows: countries with units/modules and credit systems; countries with units/modules and no credit systems; countries without units/modules and predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET; and countries without units/modules and predominantly school-based IVET. According to the evaluators, 'the highest potential added value of ECVET was for the countries with units/modules and no credit systems. The countries without units/modules and predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET 'saw the potential of ECVET in improving the flexibility of national VET system by increasing transfer'. Moreover the latter cluster was the least committed to the idea of accepting the need to make existing national credit systems compatible with ECVET.'³³

According to the evaluation, one of the main potential benefits of participation in ECVET is the mobility of learners and workers. Whilst the respondents to the evaluation survey were relatively clear that ECVET largely contributed to the mobility of learners, they were doubtful about its contribution to the mobility of workers. It is unclear which category contains apprentices, but if they have been put in with workers, then this is not a positive indication.

³¹ <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/en>

³² European Commission, *Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)*, 2014. p 10, 32.

³³ *Ibid*, p 61

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

Members States agreed in 2009 to set up a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET to develop a quality cycle supported by a series of quality criteria, and a set of indicative descriptors and reference indicators for each phase of the process (planning, implementing, evaluating and reviewing), which would then enable them to improve and further develop their own VET systems.

It was agreed that Member States would each devise an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, involving the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), regional and local authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders. In addition, they would each establish a Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET that would bring together existing relevant bodies, with social partners and all stakeholders concerned at national and regional levels, in order to ensure the follow-up of the different initiatives.³⁴

Accordingly, EQAVET would be applied at the VET-system, VET-provider and qualification-awarding levels and aim to provide a systemic approach to quality, covering and interrelating the relevant levels and actors. The framework would give strong emphasis to monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external evaluation, review and processes for improvement, supported by measurement and qualitative analysis.

EQAVET is in theory well-placed to provide guidance on ways in which quality assurance of VET can be improved and by extension a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships could be designed and implemented. The recent evaluation of EQAVET, published in 2014, concludes that 'EQAVET objectives remain relevant in the context of European priorities and policies in the field of education and training and beyond', and 'directly or indirectly, EQAVET supported changes in quality assurance systems and measures in two thirds of countries analysed'.

However one major concern for this particular study is the observation made in the evaluation that, while the school-based aspects of quality assurance in VET are well covered by EQAVET, the framework does not provide specific guidance for quality assurance of work-based learning. Moreover neither the descriptors nor the indicators provide guidance on quality assurance of work-based learning.³⁵

EQAVET responded quickly and proposed a series of building blocks that could be used to adopt a quality assurance approach (Design, Improve, Respond, Communicate, Train, Assess) for work-based learning, but from the perspective of training institutions. They are designed to support VET providers,³⁶ and not in-company mentors.

Any Quality Framework for Apprenticeships would need to address school-based elements **and** in-company work-based elements, **and** also a synthesis of the two elements – thus encapsulating the specificity of apprenticeship training - and so would require a three-pronged approach.

In terms of stakeholder involvement at the European level the evaluation notes that European social partner representatives are engaged in these structures 'though mainly from the side of employers'. There is a view among some stakeholders that national representatives are largely coming from ministries and national social partners are underrepresented.³⁷ Indeed one of the recommendations of the evaluation is 'to consider strengthening the engagement of national VET stakeholders and those with interests in transparency of VET quality assurance systems in European cooperation and governance on VET quality assurance'.

³⁴ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/01)

³⁵ ICF GHK, *Evaluation of implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) Final report*, 2013, pp 1, 9, 39, 83.

³⁶ <http://www.eqavet.eu/workbasedlearning/GNS/guidelines.aspx>

³⁷ *Ibid*, p 91

TRADE UNIONS AND EU EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTRUMENTS

At the European level

In its contribution to the consultation on the European Area of Skills and Qualifications the European Trade Union Confederation and the European Trade Union Committee for Education made a number of important points.

They consider that there are too many different qualification, transparency and recognition instruments, and there is no overarching coordination between the activities of Directorates General in the European Commission, or Ministries at the national level, or between National Agencies and National Coordination Points. In addition, the instruments have often been set up to serve the purposes of different educational sectors and are not interlinked, for example ECVET for vocational education and training and the European Credit Transfer System for higher education. Moreover there is a proposal for quality assurance in VET (EQAVET) and higher education (QH-EHEA) but not for all education and training settings.

The process of implementation of the tools is patchy at best, particularly at grassroots level in education and training institutions and workplaces.

The social partners were not fully involved (and in some cases not at all) in the design and initial implementation of the various instruments at both EU and national levels, and most of the National Agencies, National Contact Points, and Departments of the Ministries dealing with these instruments are not in a dialogue with the social partners.

More continuous evaluation of the instruments would have made it possible to identify shortcomings more quickly and then take remedial action.

Finally, European citizens are generally unaware of the existence of the instruments and so cannot use them.

At the national level

The last point is most telling, because in general terms most trade union officers consulted for this study were unable to give an opinion on the EU education and training instruments, for the simple reason that they did not know what the instruments are, what they do, and how they could be used to support vocational education and training in general and apprenticeships in particular.

At the other end of spectrum, some trade union officers were aware of one or more of the EU instruments, because they were members of national networks created to support the implementation of the instruments or members of European networks involved in monitoring VET developments. However, in spite of the requirements within the Recommendations (and Decision for Europass) to associate trade unions in the consultation processes, some considered that the level of involvement was weak, which in turn militated against a commitment to understanding the different elements of terminology and the links that need to be made between the European terms and traditional national practices.

These findings reinforce the comments made in the formal evaluations about the need for activities aiming to increase awareness, understanding and interest in the different EU instruments, and the priority that should be given to social partners (trade unions and employer's organisations).

If the EU instruments were unfamiliar however, some of the central features of the instruments were not, because they were being addressed at the national level within the context of national initiatives and discussions, as a result of European developments.

Some favourable comments were made about the importance of learning outcomes - what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process - which are generally well understood and used in VET systems and apprenticeship training. However, there is no consensus on how learning outcomes are expressed.

Some favourable comments were also made, in the case of the EQF, about the potential 'to bring VET out of the shadows' and into the mainstream of education and training policy, thus giving greater visibility to vocational education and training qualifications. A clear example would be the classification of apprenticeship qualifications in Germany at Level 4 and the prestigious Meister qualification at Level 6. The potential for progression from one level to another was also favourably received.

Considerable disappointment was expressed about the lack of opportunities for apprentices, particularly in terms of European mobility. The Bologna process and Erasmus have provided opportunities for hundreds and thousands of university students, but ECVET and Erasmus have not provided the same opportunities for apprentices.

Not only was there concern about the complexities of the different instruments and the sometimes impenetrable terminology, but also about the ways in which the EU instruments combine with each other, or more to the point, do not combine, as is demonstrated by the following two tables from the formal evaluation exercises.

Table 1 shows the potential for synergy between ECVET, Europass, EQF and EQAVET, as seen from the perspective of the ECVET evaluator.

Table 1: Potential integration/additional synergies of ECVET elements with other initiatives

Relevant ECVET element	Europass	EQF	EQAVET
Learning outcomes	<p>State of play: Most Europass documents (but not the Diploma Supplement) focus on competences, but only the Certificate Supplement and to some extent the Europass Mobility include a structured description of learning outcomes</p>	<p>State of play: Learning Outcomes approach is strongly promoted under EQF, but there is no grass-roots (training provider level) practical exercise on their development</p> <p>Possible changes: introducing a provider-level learning outcomes promotion dimension</p>	<p>State of play: ECVET promotes mutual trust via quality of learning outcomes, and EQAVET does not</p> <p>Possible changes: application of EQAVET cycle for quality assurance of learning outcomes</p>
Units of learning outcomes	<p>State of play: Europass documents refer to competences, but not expressly to units of learning outcomes</p>	No relevant synergies possible	No current synergy links established
Documentation (Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreements, transcript of records)	<p>State of play: Europass Mobility is reported to be used as transcript of records</p> <p>Possible changes: Upon review, Mobility could act as the transcript of records</p>	<p>State of play: Each qualification should be described in terms of learning outcomes</p>	No current synergy links established

Source: European Commission, Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), 2014, pp 39-40.

Table 2 makes a comparison between the key features of EQAVET, EQF and ECVET, as seen from the perspective of the EQAVET evaluator.

Table 2: Comparison between key features of EQAVET and EQF and ECVET

EQAVET	EQF	ECVET
Overall aims of EQAVET: transparency, mobility, mutual trust and lifelong learning	Yes	Yes
Stakeholder involvement	Yes	Yes
Focus on learning outcomes, qualifications and the certification process	Yes	Yes
Responsiveness to labour market needs	Not in the legal text but in supporting explanatory material	Not in the legal text but in supporting explanatory material
Teachers and trainers preparation and development	X	X
Management of VET at different levels	X	X
Measurement of achievement	X	X
Governance (including review)	X	X
Communication about results	X	X
Other key components which are not explicit in EQAVET	Lifelong learning Formal as well as non-formal and informal learning	Lifelong learning Individualisation and transitions (accumulation and transfer) Formal as well as non-formal and informal learning

Source: ICF GHK, *Evaluation of implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) Final Report*, 2013, p 39.

The final point of this section is that, if the EU education and training instruments are going to be implemented effectively at the national level, there will be major consequences for apprenticeship training, and it is essential that recognised stakeholders at the national level, social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) are involved in these discussions.

4. QUALITY STANDARDS, QUALITY CRITERIA AND BEST PRACTICE -

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATION OF A EUROPEAN QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

INTRODUCTION

This section is designed to present the twenty quality standards for apprenticeships **(in red)** which were agreed by the ETUC Executive Committee in 2013 and a series of quality criteria **(in black)** that enable these standards to be measured in a readily understandable way. In addition this section presents a series of examples of best practice to illustrate the different aspects of quality standards.

To simplify the ways in which the quality standards can be measured, the quality criteria have been formulated as questions which invite the answer 'yes' or 'no'. The more apprenticeship stakeholders can reply 'yes' to these questions, the greater the likelihood of a quality apprenticeship system.

In addition this section provides an illustration of the general consensus that exists between the various ETUC quality standards and criteria and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships 'guiding principles' that have already been adopted by the Council of the European Union **(in blue)** which is made up of representatives of all Member States, and the 'guiding principles' **(in purple)** published by the European Commission on the basis of the deliberations of its Working Group on Vocational Education and Training.

On this basis this section constitutes a practical European trade union contribution to the preparation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

1. DEFINITION

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be clearly defined on the basis of the proposal made by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, a specialised agency set up by the European Union
ETUC Quality Criterion	Is there a clear definition of an apprenticeship at the national and European levels?

More and more Member States are investing time and energy and political capital in the development of apprenticeship training, and unsurprisingly they and other stakeholders in the process need to know and understand what is being developed. This is particularly important if public funds are being used to support apprenticeships. This clearly requires a definition at the national and European levels.

Indeed the UK Government is in the process of proposing legislation to protect the term ‘apprenticeship’ from misuse. It will be considered as an offence if a person, in the course of business, provides or offers a course or training as an apprenticeship if it is not a statutory apprenticeship.

At the European level Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, came up with a definition some years ago. It stresses the importance of a systematic planned approach, a considerable duration and a balance between school- and work-based training in a company. It requires a formal contract between the apprentice and the employer which covers the rights and obligations of each party, including the payment of a wage. It underlines the responsibility of the employer to provide suitable training, and this training should be linked to an occupation.

To bring this definition up to speed with the latest developments in National Qualifications Frameworks and the European Qualifications Framework, it would need to include a reference to acquiring a recognised qualification.

1. Definition - best practice - example

Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, has proposed the following definition:

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

2. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be built on stable foundations – on the basis of national law, regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements
ETUC Quality Criteria	Is there a regulatory framework for apprenticeships? Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of apprentices? Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of employers? Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of training institutions?

For an apprenticeship strategy to be implemented successfully it is necessary to ensure, as one of the guiding principles proposed by the Council of the European Union demonstrates - see below - that ‘the

responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved are clearly formulated and are enforceable'. These principles may be set out in the form of a collective agreement or collective agreements, signed between social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), or, more likely, in the form of legislation, as is the case in this example of best practice from Luxembourg.

2. Regulatory Framework - best practice – example - Luxembourg

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Luxembourg is based on the Reform of Vocational Education and Training Act (2008), which, *inter alia*, covers the responsibilities of all stakeholders, remuneration, assessment and conditions for in-company training. According to Article 2, a formal apprenticeship is 'carried out in an organised and structured context in an education/training institution or at the workplace and designed explicitly as an apprenticeship in terms of objectives, time and resources'. The ratio of in-company to school-based training varies according to the sector, but in-company training is in the majority.

The Act makes provision for social partner involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training. VET in Luxembourg is based on a partnership between the State and the Chambers representing employers' and employees' organisations that are responsible for the training. More specifically in terms of apprenticeship training, the social partners, via the Chambers, are members of curriculum teams that are responsible for drawing up occupational standards, training profiles and training curricula. In addition they are responsible for drawing up the criteria and procedures for the assessment of apprentices. They are also responsible for the accreditation of workplaces for apprenticeship training.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Establishing an appropriate regulatory framework, whereby the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved are clearly formulated and are enforceable (3a)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	A clear and consistent legal framework enabling apprenticeship partners to act effectively and guaranteeing mutual rights and responsibilities (Principle 1)

3. SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be governed at all levels by a partnership between the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), together with public authorities and training institutions
ETUC Quality Criteria	<p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the design of apprenticeship policy?</p> <p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the implementation of apprenticeship policy?</p> <p>Are social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the accreditation of companies for apprenticeships?</p> <p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the accreditation of training institutions?</p> <p>Does involvement by social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) in governance structures lead to influence over apprenticeship policy-making strategy?</p>

Social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) play a key role in the design and implementation of well-regarded and successful apprenticeship strategies. The commitment of employers is essential to ensure that there is a training offer that reflects the existing and future needs of the labour market and

that there is a sufficient supply of places for apprentices. Trade unions ensure that apprenticeship programmes are broadly defined and meet the existing and future needs of young people in the labour market. Moreover trade union representatives provide support and guidance to apprentices in the workplace. Cooperation between the social partners at different levels contributes to a stability and commitment which enhances the attractiveness of apprenticeships for young people (and their parents). Moreover national strategies evolve, governments and Ministers come and go, and this stability is particularly important at a time of political and administrative change.

3. Social partnership and governance - best practice – example - Germany

Social partnership is central to the German apprenticeship system, and the Vocational Training Act makes provision for wide-ranging trade union involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training, by means of formal participation in education and training bodies at all levels.

At the national level social partners (trade unions and employers’ organisations) are members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, which is often described as Germany’s VET Parliament and which conducts research into apprenticeship training and provides service and consultancy functions to the Federal Government and vocational training providers. At the regional level they are members of Regional Committees for Vocational Training which advise the regional governments on apprenticeship training issues. At the local level they are members of the Vocational Training Committees of the ‘Competent Bodies’, which are responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring apprenticeship training (supervising training institutions, assessing trainers, and organising examinations) and providing advisory services for apprenticeship training.

Council of the European Union ‘guiding principles’

Encouraging national partnerships with social partners in the design, implementation and governance of apprenticeship schemes, together with other relevant stakeholders such as, where appropriate, intermediary bodies (chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, professional and sectorial organisations), education and training providers, youth and student organisations, and local, regional as well as national authorities (3b).

European Commission ‘guiding principles’

A structured, continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners including a transparent way of coordination and decision-making (Principle 2)
Strengthening the role of social partners by capacity building, assuming ownership and taking on responsibility for implementation (Principle 3)

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should cover a wide range of different occupations and thus provide employment opportunities for all, men and women alike
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprenticeship schemes provide for a variety of training linked to different occupations? Do apprenticeship schemes offer opportunities for all and in addition include measures to encourage the participation of under-represented groups?

Apprenticeships provide a valuable bridge between school and the world of work and are a tool for social inclusion, but not all young people benefit to the same extent. The opportunities for young people to gain access to some apprenticeship schemes are limited, particularly for high status and highly paid occupations. Moreover, the opportunities to complete apprenticeship training for some social groups

may be compromised. In order to be able to remedy this situation and provide opportunities for all, a first step is to understand the extent of the problem. Unionlearn, the education and training department of the Trades Union Congress, has undertaken research showing the difficulties some young people may face in gaining access to apprenticeship schemes and completing their training.

4. Equal opportunities for all – best practice – example – United Kingdom

Unionlearn, the education and training department of the Trades Union Congress, has investigated the issue of access to apprenticeships for under-represented groups on the basis of gender and race. The report examines the impact on diversity of the expansion of the apprenticeship programmes. It explores the nature of the barriers encountered by different groups and makes a series of recommendations for improving the inclusion of young women and members of ethnic minority groups into apprenticeship schemes.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Covering multiple sectors and occupations, including new and innovative sectors with a high employment potential, and taking into account forecasts of future skills needs (3g).
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Supporting companies providing apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners (Principle 9)

5. EQUITABLE COST-SHARING BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be properly funded, with equitable cost-sharing between employers and public authorities at regional and/or national and European levels
ETUC Quality Criteria	Are apprenticeship schemes supported financially by employers? Are apprenticeship schemes supported financially by public authorities? Are apprentices exempt from paying tuition fees?

Generally employers provide salaries for apprentices and the public authorities finance the costs of the school-based training, but in between these two clear positions there is a variety of different practices. As can be seen from the example of best practice, some employers may be required to pay an apprentice tax to fund training, as has been the case in France for many years, or an apprentice levy which has recently been proposed in England. Employers in other Member States may pay for extra costs (for example protective clothing), particularly if this forms part of a collective agreement. However employers may not pay the entirety of the apprentices' pay, sometimes only the period of time spent in work-based training, and there is evidence that some pay less than the rate for the job or the legal minimum wage. In some Member States public authorities may provide employers with financial subsidies, for the reimbursement of in-company mentors' wages for example, or to cover the period spent by the apprentice off-the-job, or agree to reductions in employers' social security contributions, so as to encourage them to take on apprentices.

Generally apprentices do not pay tuition fees.

5. Equitable cost-sharing between employers and public authorities - best practice – examples – France, United Kingdom

In France companies pay an 'apprenticeship tax' equivalent to 0.68% of their gross pay bill. 77% of the funds collected are destined specifically for apprenticeship training.

In England an apprenticeship levy is expected to come into effect in April 2017. Companies will pay 0.5% of their gross pay bill to fund apprenticeships. To make it more acceptable, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, all employers will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against the payment of the levy, which means that companies with a paybill of less than £3 million will pay nothing.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available (3f)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Sharing costs and benefits to the mutual advantage of companies, VET providers and learners (Principle 5)

6. RESPONSIVENESS TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should cater for the real employment and skills needs of employers within the framework of sectoral and/or national priorities
ETUC Quality Criterion	Are apprenticeship schemes developed in the light of future employment needs reflecting national and/or sectoral priorities?

Young people take up apprenticeships because they 'earn while they learn', and they expect to find a job more readily at the end of the process. There is evidence from a study commissioned by the European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors*, that 'apprenticeships have consistently yielded positive employment outcomes and not only in countries typically associated with the dual training system like Germany and Austria'. For this there needs to be some approximate balance between the supply of apprentices and the demands of the labour market, and this can in part be regulated by requiring young people to obtain a training place and a contract with an employer before they begin their apprenticeship. There also needs to be a broader process of labour market anticipation at sectoral level for establishing this equilibrium, and, as can be seen from this example of best practice, 'trade committees' in Denmark are particularly well-placed to be able to manage this process.

6. Responsiveness to labour market needs – best practice - example - Denmark

Social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) have equal representation on the 48 different sectoral 'trade committees', *faglige udvalg* in Danish, which, *inter alia*, are responsible for identifying and anticipating labour market needs and for making projections as far as jobs and apprenticeships are concerned. They calculate the numbers that are required and establish the skills and competences that are needed. They then draw up proposals for meeting these needs - setting up new apprenticeship programmes, making adjustments and, where necessary, closing existing programmes.

These proposals are then sent to the National Advisory Council for Basic Vocational Training, where trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations, for its approval. On the basis of its advice, the Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality decides what formal steps to take.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Covering multiple sectors and occupations, including new and innovative sectors with a high employment potential, and taking into account forecasts of future skills needs (3g)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Ensuring the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in companies and society (Principle 17)

7. FORMAL CONTRACTS

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should require employers to enter into formal employment contracts with apprentices describing the rights and obligations of both parties
ETUC Quality Criteria	<p>Is there a labour contract?</p> <p>Does the contract with the employer cover the following: duration, employer’s obligations; apprentices’ rights and obligations, learning outcomes, pay, hours, holiday entitlement and termination?</p> <p>Does the contract with the training institution cover the following: duration, apprentices’ rights and obligations, learning outcomes and termination?</p>

Formal contracts reinforce and form part of the regulatory framework. They enable the different stakeholders to know what the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party are. They cover basic industrial relations issues, such as pay, and holidays, and also importantly aspects of the training that is going to take place. In some Member States, a basic minimum is stipulated by law. This will often be complemented by further decisions to be found in collective agreements at sectoral and/or company level or, as in the case of this example of best practice from Luxembourg, the appropriate professional chambers.

7. Formal contracts – best practice – example - Luxembourg

The contract must contain the following information:

- the identity of the owner (full name) and address and occupation; if applicable, the name and address of the company and the identity (full name) and quality of (the) legal representatives
- the identity of the apprentice (full name), date of birth, place of birth, and address
- the occupation being taught to the apprentice
- the objectives and training methods required for the occupation
- the date of signature, the starting date and the duration of the contract
- the rights and obligations of the signatories
- where appropriate, the duration of the trial period
- annual holiday entitlement
- hours of work
- remuneration
- the place of learning
- all other conditions agreed between the parties concerning, for example, housing, food, remuneration.

8. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES OF APPRENTICES

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should support the personal development and career opportunities of apprentices
ETUC Quality Criterion	Do apprenticeship schemes make provision for the development of key competences and transversal skills?

There is more and more consensus that young people need a series of key competences to be able to face the challenges of daily life, in society and in the labour market, and as long ago as 2006 the European Parliament and the Council of the European adopted a Recommendation for key competences for lifelong learning – ‘a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes... necessary for personal ful-

filment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment'. They are 'essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labour force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world'.

The Recommendation described them as communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. As can be seen from this Dutch example, the importance of this is recognised in the latest reform to VET in general and apprenticeship training in particular.

8. Personal development and career opportunities of apprentices – best practice – example – the Netherlands

The qualification system in the Netherlands is in the process of being revised and will enter into force in 2016. The aim is to make qualifications more broad-based, with a general section on key competences and transversal skills such as an ability to communicate in Dutch, mathematical competence, social and civic competences, and career management skills; a basic vocational section for all occupations within a specific qualification; certain vocational modules; and also a number of optional modules which are relevant for a range of different qualifications. In this way it is expected that the broader definition of the qualification, the general section on key competences and transversal skills, plus the optional modules, will provide apprentices (and also students in vocational training institutions) with more varied career opportunities and a preparation for entering higher education, if appropriate.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'

Including a strong work-based high-quality learning and training component, which should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, ensuring that participants can adapt to change after finishing the apprenticeship (3e)

9. PAY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should ensure that apprentices are paid by the employer, according to collective agreements, or a national and/or sectoral minimum legal wage, for the period of training
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprentices receive remuneration from the employer, on the basis of collective bargaining agreements and/or the minimum legal wage? Do apprentices receive any other financial support? Are apprentices covered by social protection regulations?

Apprentices are generally paid on the basis of collective bargaining agreements, or, failing that, the minimum legal wage. Within these approaches, there are other differentiating factors. Apprentices in the former West Germany are paid slightly more than their counterparts in the former East Germany, and apprentices in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium are paid more than their counterparts in the French-speaking parts. Generally younger apprentices receive less than older ones. In some Member States apprentices receive a wage for the periods of work-based and school-based training; in others apprentices receive a wage for the former and a training allowance for the latter. As can be seen from the best practice example, in Luxembourg there are two other distinctions, the type of qualification involved and the progress made through the system. As their productivity increases, so do their wages. There is however evidence that some apprentices are paid less than minimum legal wage and/or the rate for the job laid down in collective agreements.

9. Pay and social protection - best practice - example

In Luxembourg apprentices' pay is fixed according to the type of qualification, the year of study, success in assessment, and the sector. For example in 2014, an apprentice hairdresser would receive €635.33 per month in the 1st Year of a Level 2 certificate, €807.65 in the 2nd Year and €1,023.00 in the 3rd Year, and an apprentice bricklayer would receive €689.20, €861.52 and €1,033.84 respectively; if on a Level 3 diploma, the former would receive €772.61 initially and €1,214.15 after passing the intermediate assessment, and the latter would receive €861.52 and €1,292.20 respectively.

In terms of social protection, Article 20.2 of the Luxembourg Reform of Vocational Education and Training Act (2008) ensures that the contract covers the provisions, laws and regulations relating to the protection of young workers, occupational health, the protection of pregnant workers who have recently given birth and are breastfeeding, protection against dismissal in case of injury, and statutory holidays.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'

Involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available (3f)

10. SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should guarantee high quality and safe working environments, and the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) should be given responsibility for monitoring the suitability of workplaces and for accrediting interested companies
ETUC Quality Criteria	Are apprentices covered by health and safety regulations in the workplace, and are these regulations implemented? Are apprentices provided with personal protective equipment, where appropriate, to carry out their training?

The importance for apprentices in having a contract of employment is that they are then protected. They know what the obligations of the employer are in terms of working time, holidays, pay, health insurance, parental leave, and importantly health and safety regulation and practice. Moreover health and safety awareness would normally feature as a part of apprenticeship training, particularly in high-risk industries, as can be seen from the example of best practice in the electricity supply industry in Italy.

10. Safe working environment – best practice– example - Italy

In 2014 Enel, the Italian Electricity Supply signed an agreement on apprenticeship with the three national unions, *Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Chimica Tessile Energia Manifatture* (FILCTEM), the *Federazione Lavoratori Aziende Elettriche Italiane* (FLAEI) and the *Unione italiana lavoratori del tessile, energia e chimica* (UILTEC), which includes the following section:

'Health and safety will be the focus of special attention during the entire period of dual training. A specific training programme will be established for this purpose alongside the acquisition of school-based subjects, the required technical knowledge and awareness focused on security in life and at work, for the protection of the individual, the environment and the region. In this context there will be specific meetings between the social partners to raise awareness on issues that the company and the trade unions see fit'. (Article 1.16)

11. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should provide appropriate guidance and counselling for apprentices, both before and during the training process
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprentices have access to career guidance and counselling services provided by qualified professionals? Do the public authorities produce statistics to show the completion rate for apprenticeships?

In a recent Eurobarometer survey *Attitudes to Vocational Education and Training* 42% of young people aged 15-24 throughout the EU totally disagreed with the statement - in your country do young people receive enough advice concerning their learning and career opportunities from schools and employment services. Only 14% of them received advice from a guidance counsellor.

And yet good career guidance can help young people to gain a greater understanding of the world of work and the different options on offer, to know what skills and competence they have and what skills and competence they need to take up these options, and all in all to make informed choices about what they could realistically do. This example of best practice from the United Kingdom provides for a balanced approach.

11. Guidance and counselling – best practice– example – United Kingdom

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation recently prepared a study *Good Career Guidance* and came up with a series of the eight benchmarks, presented below, identifying different dimensions of good career guidance, with indicators to measure performance, and a set of ten recommendations:

- a stable careers programme
- learning from career and labour market information
- addressing the needs of each pupil
- linking curriculum learning to careers
- encounters with employers and employees
- experiences of workplaces
- encounters with further and higher education
- personal guidance

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by providing career guidance, preparatory training and other targeted support (3h)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Career guidance to empower young people to make well-founded choices (Principle 13)

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should have robust quality assurance procedures
ETUC Quality Criteria	Is there a quality assurance system for apprenticeship training at national/regional level? Are training institutions subject to quality assurance inspections carried out by independent bodies? Are companies subject to quality assurance inspections carried out by independent bodies? Are social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) involved in the evaluation of apprenticeship schemes? Are apprentices involved in the evaluation of apprenticeship schemes?

Trade unions in some Member States are in a position to play a role in assuring quality at a systemic level in the committees and boards of national, regional and/or sectoral VET bodies on which they sit. In addition, some are also involved at the local level, either in professional Chambers, or perhaps local training institutions. These examples of best practice from Germany show how trade unions can act directly, either by supporting local trade union representatives in local vocational training committees or by asking apprentices to evaluate their own training.

12. Quality assurance procedures – best practice– example - Germany

The Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund and IG Metall produced a booklet *Qualitätsrahmen für die Berufsausbildung* (Quality Framework for Vocational Training) which is designed to support trade union representatives in their participation in local vocational training committees. This guide examines the different aspects of apprentice training – inputs, process and outputs – in order to ascertain whether quality standards have been met. It highlights the different phases - guidance, preparation for vocational training, company requirements, qualified assessors, company training design, cooperation between school-based and work-based training, assessment implementation, and assessment success. It also provides an evaluation check list which can be used by in-company mentors and apprentices.

In a separate initiative the youth section of the DGB undertakes an annual survey of apprentice training. In the latest version apprentices were asked for their opinions on a series of questions under four overarching themes: technical quality of training in the company; training periods and overtime; pay; and personal assessment of the training.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Ensuring that the qualifications and competences gained and the learning process of apprenticeships are of high quality with defined standards for learning outcomes and quality assurance, in line with the Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, and that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs (3d)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Providing a clear framework for quality assurance of apprenticeships at the system provider and company levels ensuring systematic feedback (Principle 16)

13. SOLID LEARNING BASE

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be built on a solid base of knowledge, skills and competence acquired in the primary and secondary school system
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprenticeship schemes have specific educational entry requirements? If young people are unable to gain access to apprenticeships, are other measures available to integrate young people into the labour market?

Apprenticeships lead on to skilled occupations that require competence in numeracy and literacy, and it is normally expected that these skills are acquired in primary and secondary schools. There is however evidence that in some cases young people are leaving formal schooling without these basic skills, and this clearly has an impact on their ability to succeed in their apprenticeships. Indeed some young people may well abandon their apprenticeships because they do not have the necessary basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics to continue.

In Member States there are debates about the need to have formal entry requirements for apprenticeships, and in Denmark, for example there has been a recent modest change in approach.

13. Solid learning base – best practice– example - Denmark

In Denmark admission to apprenticeship foundation courses was traditionally open to all young people who had completed compulsory schooling. There was no specific requirement as to subjects or grades. However the new strategy *Improving Vocational Education and Training* stipulates that young people will need to obtain at least grade 2 (considered as an adequate performance) in two specific subjects, Danish and mathematics, in their secondary school leaving examination to be accepted for an apprenticeship.

14. BALANCE BETWEEN WORK-BASED AND SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should include a strong training component, with a clear majority of learning provided in the workplace and a clear commitment to forward-looking developments within the labour market and society
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprenticeship schemes provide for a majority of time to be spent learning in the workplace? Do apprenticeship schemes contain guidelines for the coordination of work-based and school-based training?

The combination of work-based and school-based training is one of the defining features of an apprenticeship. Apprentices generally spend the majority of their apprenticeship in the workplace, and this may range from 50% up to 80%. Another defining feature is the synthesis of these two elements, and this requires specific attention to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing, with apprentices learning the theory in a training institution and putting it into practice in the workplace. The two examples from Ireland demonstrate the importance of preparing curricula and training practice which blend the two - the appropriate theory and practice to carry out the tasks required for the occupation.

14. Balance between work-based and school-based training – best practice– example

In Ireland apprenticeship agencies have developed detailed curricula for different occupations – both for the school-based (off-the-job) phases and the work-based (on-the-job) phases with information on aims, objectives, learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance, duties and responsibilities of apprentices, employers, occupational profiles (core skills, specialist skills, common skills, personal skills), modular plans, personal protection equipment, equipment and tools, training aids and resources.

The Electricity Supply Board, for example, has produced an Apprentice Logbook which provides a detailed catalogue of what an apprentice is required to learn in the on-job training, forms for apprentice records of experience, technical and behavioral assessment forms and apprentice supervisor and technical review sheets. These form part of the formal assessment process.

Council of the European Union 'guiding principles'	Including a strong work-based high-quality learning and training component, which should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, ensuring that participants can adapt to change after finishing the apprenticeship (3e)
European Commission 'guiding principles'	Systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies (Principle 4) Finding the right balance between the specific skill need of training companies and the general need to improve the employability of apprentices (Principle 7) Fostering mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation between the apprenticeship partners (Principle 18)

15. TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND MENTORS

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should provide good quality training in the workplace, with in-company mentors trained for this purpose, and also within training institutions employing trainers that have up-to-date and appropriate skills. Both mentors and trainers should enjoy good working conditions so that they are able to do their job properly
ETUC Quality Criteria	Are teachers and trainers working with apprentices in training institutions required by law to have a formal qualification? Do apprenticeship schemes make provision for the training of in-company mentors? Do apprenticeship schemes ensure that teachers and trainers have access and support to continuing training to carry out their technical and pedagogical obligations both in training institutions and in companies?

Generally in vocational training institutions there are two profiles for teaching staff: general subject teachers who are usually university graduates with a supplementary teaching qualification or graduates with a qualification in teaching; and vocational subject trainers with professional experience and some form of teaching qualification obtained either before or more often after being recruited and within a certain time period.

Given the demands of apprenticeship training in-company mentors have a particularly important role to play. They provide a learning environment within the company, supervise and assess the apprentice's learning activities and provide a link to the apprentice's training institution. For some in-company mentors, these skills come naturally, for other they do not, and so they need support. This French example of good practice shows what needs to be done – develop a training standard, provide for in-service training and ensure that the in-company mentors' skills and competence are validated. The key to this of course is time – time to participate in in-service training and time to spend on training apprentices.

In many Member States teaching staff in training institutions are formally required to keep their skills up to date. In some cases they are entitled to take a certain number of days training per year to do this, but evidence would suggest that the take up is limited.

15. Teachers, trainers and mentors – best practice– example - France

In France the national inter-professional agreement signed by the social partners in 2011 made provision for the establishment of a training standard for in-company mentors (Article 6) and for the establishment of the principles for a charter for quality in-company mentors.

On this basis an in-company mentor should be able to induct an apprentice, contribute to the acquisition of his or her vocational skills, liaise with training institutions that are responsible for training, assessing and monitoring the progress of the apprentice, and participate in assessment and the follow up of training.

Training to become a mentor generally lasts 2 days and leads to an in-company mentor skills certificate.

European Commission 'guiding principles'	<p>Motivating and supporting companies to assign qualified trainers and tutors (Principle 10)</p> <p>Enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeships by raising the quality of VET teachers (Principle 14)</p> <p>Supporting the continuous professional development of in-company trainers and improving their working conditions (Principle 20)</p>
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16. COMPETENCE BASED /DURATION

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be competence-based and have a duration which enables apprentices to attain the appropriate standards to work competently and safely
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprenticeships have a duration consonant with the learning required to carry out an occupation? Do the public authorities produce statistics to show the transition rate from apprenticeship to employment?

Apprenticeships vary in length and also are often at different levels on National Qualifications Frameworks. They share certain basic principles, but can have a different duration because they lead to different types of qualifications. In England the minimum duration is now 12 months, but engineering apprenticeships may typically last 3 years. In France apprenticeships last for 1 to 3 years, according to the type of occupation and qualification chosen, but the average is 2 years. In Germany they last 2 to 3.5 years, depending upon the qualification. In Denmark an apprenticeship lasts 3.5 to 4 years. In Ireland apprenticeships last a minimum of 4 years, except in the print media sector. In the Netherlands they last 2, 3, or 4 years depending upon the level of the qualification, as can be seen from the example of best practice.

Statistics to show the transition rate from apprenticeship to employment are produced, but generally on an irregular basis.

16. Competence based/duration – best practice – example - Netherlands

In the Netherlands it is possible to reconcile the notion of competence required for a certain occupation and the duration of apprenticeship training by means of the qualification level. Apprentices can enrol for different types of apprenticeship training leading to different types of qualification. They can enrol on a basic vocational programme that lasts two years (EQF Level 2), a professional education programme that lasts three years (EQF Level 3) or a middle management VET programme which lasts three to four years (EQF Level 4).

17. CERTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should be certified by competent tri-partite bodies to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competences acquired are recognised within the labour market and throughout the education and training system
ETUC Quality Criterion	Do apprenticeship schemes ensure that social partners are formally involved in the assessment and certification of knowledge, skills and competences required to carry out a recognised occupation?

It is clearly important that at the end of an apprenticeship young people have the knowledge, skills and competence to carry out a recognised occupation. This is one of defining features of an apprenticeship. Who are the best placed to assess and certify this? – those that are closest to the needs of the labour market, representatives of the social partners themselves. As can be seen from the best practice example, this is common practice in some Member States, and in this particular case, Luxembourg.

17. Certification and recognition – best practice– example - Luxembourg

In Luxembourg traditional examinations have given way to an ‘integrated project’ which, as its name suggests, aims to test an apprentice’s ability to demonstrate a variety of inter-related skills, and

this in a real or simulated work situation. The ‘integrated project’ must be carried out in less than 24 hours, with a maximum of 8 hours per day. The project is assessed by a team which is composed of a teacher, a representative of the employers, a representative of the Chamber of Employees and chaired by a representative of the Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth, on the basis of a grid established by the curriculum team that established the training programme.

Council of the European Union ‘guiding principles’	Ensuring adequate integration of the apprenticeship schemes into the formal education and training system through a system of recognised qualifications and competences which may allow access to higher education and lifelong learning. (3c)
European Commission ‘guiding principles’	Ensuring fair, valid, and authentic assessment of learning outcomes (Principle 19)

18. PROGRESSION

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should offer qualifications which are clearly placed within National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), thus ensuring progression pathways to other NQF levels and programmes
ETUC Quality Criteria	Do apprenticeship schemes provide for qualifications which are formally recognised within National Qualification Frameworks? Do apprenticeship schemes offer qualifications which provide progression pathways from one level to another?

Apprenticeships have often been considered unattractive because they are a ‘cul de sac’ - apprentices ‘get stuck’ and are not able to progress to other forms and levels of education and training. The classification of VET qualifications into a National Qualification Framework provides formal evidence of a certain quality and recognition, and parity of esteem between VET qualifications and general education qualifications, and helps to open up the possibility for progression pathways.

18. Progression – best practice– example - Netherlands

In the Netherlands there are two pathways for gaining a VET qualification: the work-based pathway, (*beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL*) and the school-based pathway (*beroepsopleidende leerweg – BOL*). The originality of the Dutch system lies in the fact that the qualifications are the same and of equal value. These qualifications are nationally recognised, and it is possible to progress from one pathway to another, and also from one level to another. With an apprentice qualification it is possible to move on to ‘specialist training’ at post-secondary level which lasts one or two years and is classified at EQF Level 4 or newly established Associate Degrees which form part of Bachelor programmes.

Council of the European Union ‘guiding principles’	Ensuring... that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs (3d) Promoting apprenticeship schemes through awareness-raising targeted at young people, their parents, education and training providers, employers and public employment services, while highlighting apprenticeships as a pathway leading to excellence which opens up broad educational and professional opportunities (3i)
European Commission ‘guiding principles’	Promoting the permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways (Principle 11)

19. RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should ensure the recognition of knowledge, skills and competence acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning
ETUC Quality Criterion	Do apprenticeship schemes recognise knowledge, skills and competence acquired by non-formal and informal learning?

In 2012 the Council of the European Union adopted a Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Member States agreed to have in place no later than 2018 arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning which enable individuals to obtain a full qualification, or part qualification, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experience. What impact will this have on apprenticeships? How will it be possible to apply the steps - identification, documentation, evaluation and, where appropriate, recognition/validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning – to apprenticeships? Will it be possible, for example, to gain exemptions from certain parts of apprenticeship training on the basis of recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning?

19. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning – best practice– example - France

Given that it has had a well-developed system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning since 2002, France is well-placed to investigate the impact that the EU Recommendation could have on apprenticeship training. In 2015 the Committee of European Affairs of the National Assembly started the process of examining ways in which the validation of non-formal and informal apprenticeships could be achieved and outlining the challenges that this would represent. It identified four possibilities: waiving certain entry requirements; offering exemptions for parts of the training; dispensing with tests and providing certification on the basis of a portfolio of skills; and issuing a certificate which is valid for the labour market.

20. MOBILITY AT THE NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS

ETUC Quality Standard	Apprenticeship schemes should include provision for the mobility of apprentices at the national and European levels
ETUC Quality Criterion	Do apprenticeship schemes provide opportunities for the mobility of apprentices at national and European levels?

The Erasmus exchange programme has been a great success for university students, and recently it was opened up to apprentices. The take up has been very limited however, and a more ambitious and proactive approach is needed to provide opportunities for the mobility of apprentices in Europe, in the way that the Grande-Région covering Luxembourg and parts of Belgium, France and Germany is planning to do.

20. Mobility at the national and European levels – best practice– example

The public authorities of the Grande-Région, which covers Rheinland-Pfalz, the Saar, Luxembourg, the Walloon region, the Walloon-Brussels Federation, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, France and the region of Lorraine, signed a wide-ranging Framework Agreement in 2014 with a number of interregional stakeholders on the subject of trans-frontier vocational education and training. More specifically they agreed to ‘bridge the gaps between the different types of regulations affecting workers and apprentices’ and examine ways in which apprenticeship training could be carried out and recognised throughout the Grande-Région.

Council of the European Union ‘guiding principles’	Ensuring... that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs (3d)
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APPENDIX 1

ETUC QUALITY STANDARDS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

Contribution to the preparation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships

Introduction

This table is designed to present the twenty quality standards for apprenticeships which were agreed by the ETUC Executive Committee in 2013 and a series of quality criteria that enable these standards to be measured in a readily understandable way. In addition the table presents a series of examples of best practice to illustrate the different aspects of quality standards.

To simplify the ways in which the quality standards can be measured, the quality criteria have been formulated as questions which invite the answer 'yes' or 'no'. The more apprenticeship stakeholders can reply 'yes' to these questions, the greater the likelihood of a quality apprenticeship system.

In addition this section provides an illustration of the general consensus that exists between the various ETUC quality standards and criteria and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships 'guiding principles' that have already been adopted by the Council of the European Union which is made up of representatives of all Member States.

On this basis this section constitutes a practical European trade union contribution to the preparation of a European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
1. Definition	Apprenticeship schemes should be clearly defined on the basis of the proposal made by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, a specialised agency set up by the European Union <i>'systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training institutions. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation'</i>	Is there a clear definition of an apprenticeship at the national and European levels?	

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
2. Regulatory Framework	Apprenticeship schemes should be built on stable foundations – on the basis of national law, regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements.	<p>Is there a regulatory framework for apprenticeships?</p> <p>Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of apprentices?</p> <p>Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of employers?</p> <p>Does the regulatory framework specify the rights and obligations of training institutions?</p>	Establishing an appropriate regulatory framework, whereby the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved are clearly formulated and are enforceable. (3a)
3. Social partnership and governance	Apprenticeship schemes should be governed at all levels by a partnership between the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), together with public authorities and training institutions. The social partners should be responsible for accrediting the training institutions	<p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the design of apprenticeship policy?</p> <p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the implementation of apprenticeship policy?</p> <p>Are social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the accreditation of companies for apprenticeships?</p> <p>Are the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) formally involved in the accreditation of training institutions?</p> <p>Does involvement by social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) in governance structures lead to influence over apprenticeship policy-making strategy?</p>	Encouraging national partnerships with social partners in the design, implementation and governance of apprenticeship schemes, together with other relevant stakeholders such as, where appropriate, intermediary bodies (chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, professional and sectorial organisations), education and training providers, youth and student organisations, and local, regional as well as national authorities. (3b)
4. Equal opportunities for all	Apprenticeship schemes should cover a wide range of different occupations and thus provide employment opportunities for all, men and women alike.	<p>Do apprenticeship schemes provide for a variety of training linked to different occupations?</p> <p>Do apprenticeship schemes offer opportunities for all and in addition include measures to encourage the participation of under-represented groups?</p>	Covering multiple sectors and occupations, including new and innovative sectors with a high employment potential, and taking into account forecasts of future skills needs. (3g)

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
5. Equitable cost-sharing between employers and public authorities	Apprenticeship schemes should be properly funded, with equitable cost-sharing between employers and public authorities at regional and/or national and European levels.	<p>Are apprenticeship schemes supported financially by employers?</p> <p>Are apprenticeship schemes supported financially by public authorities?</p> <p>Are apprentices exempt from paying tuition fees?</p>	Involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available. (3f)
6. Responsiveness to labour market needs	Apprenticeship schemes should cater for the real employment and skills needs of employers within the framework of sectoral and/or national priorities.	Are apprenticeship schemes developed in the light of future employment needs reflecting national and/or sectoral priorities?	Covering multiple sectors and occupations, including new and innovative sectors with a high employment potential, and taking into account forecasts of future skills needs. (3g)
7. Formal contracts	Apprenticeship schemes should require employers to enter into formal employment contracts with apprentices describing the rights and obligations of both parties.	<p>Is there a labour contract?</p> <p>Does the contract with the employer cover the following: duration, employer's obligations; apprentices' obligations, learning outcomes, pay, hours, holiday entitlement and termination?</p> <p>Does the contract with the training institution cover the following: duration, apprentices' obligations, learning outcomes and termination?</p>	
8. Personal development and career opportunities of apprentices	4: Apprenticeship schemes should support the personal development and career opportunities of apprentices.	Do apprenticeship schemes make provision for the development of key competences and transversal skills?	Including a strong work-based high-quality learning and training component, which should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, ensuring that participants can adapt to change after finishing the apprenticeship (3e)
9. Pay and social protection	Apprenticeship schemes should ensure that apprentices are paid by the employer, according to collective agreements, or a national and/or sectoral minimum legal wage, for the period of training.	<p>Does the apprentice receive remuneration from the employer, on the basis of collective bargaining agreements and/or the minimum legal wage?</p> <p>Do apprentices receive any other financial support?</p> <p>Are apprentices covered by social protection regulations?</p>	Involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available. (3f)

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
10. Safe working environment	Apprenticeship schemes should guarantee high quality and safe working environments, and the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) should be given responsibility for monitoring the suitability of workplaces and for accrediting interested companies.	<p>Are apprentices covered by health and safety regulations in the workplace, and are these regulations implemented?</p> <p>Are apprentices provided with personal protective equipment, where appropriate, to carry out their training?</p>	Involving both employers and public authorities sufficiently in the funding of apprenticeship schemes, whilst ensuring adequate remuneration and social protection of apprentices, and providing appropriate incentives for all actors to participate, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and for an adequate supply of apprenticeship places to be made available. (3f)
11. Guidance and counselling	Apprenticeship schemes should provide appropriate guidance and counselling for apprentices, both before and during the training process.	<p>Do apprenticeship schemes provide guidance and counselling services provided by qualified professionals?</p> <p>Do the public authorities produce statistics to show the completion rate for apprenticeships?</p>	Facilitating the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by providing career guidance, preparatory training and other targeted support (3h)
12. Quality assurance procedures	Apprenticeship schemes should have robust quality assurance procedures.	<p>Is there a quality assurance system for apprenticeship training at national/regional level?</p> <p>Are training institutions subject to quality assurance inspections carried out by independent bodies?</p> <p>Are companies subject to quality assurance inspections carried out by independent bodies?</p> <p>Are social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) involved in the evaluation of apprenticeship schemes?</p> <p>Are apprentices involved in the evaluation of apprenticeship schemes?</p>	Ensuring that the qualifications and competences gained and the learning process of apprenticeships are of high quality with defined standards for learning outcomes and quality assurance, in line with the Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, and that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs. (3d)
13. Solid learning base	Apprenticeship schemes should be built on a solid base of knowledge, skills and competence acquired in the primary and secondary school system.	<p>Do apprenticeship schemes have specific entry requirements?</p> <p>If young people are unable to gain access to apprenticeships, are other measures available to integrate young people into the labour market?</p>	

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
14. Balance between work-based and school-based training	Apprenticeship schemes should include a strong training component, with a clear majority of learning provided in the workplace and a clear commitment to forward-looking developments within the labour market and society.	Do apprenticeship schemes provide for a majority of time to be spent learning in the workplace? Do apprenticeship schemes contain guidelines for the coordination of work-based and school-based training?	Including a strong work-based high-quality learning and training component, which should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, ensuring that participants can adapt to change after finishing the apprenticeship. (3e)
15. Teachers, trainers and mentors	Apprenticeship schemes should provide good quality training in the workplace, with in-company mentors trained for this purpose, and also within training institutions employing trainers that have up-to-date and appropriate skills. Both mentors and trainers should enjoy good working conditions so that they are able to do their job properly.	Are teachers and trainers working with apprentices in training institutions required by law to have a formal qualification? Do apprenticeship schemes provide for the training of in-company mentors? Do apprenticeship schemes ensure that teachers and trainers have access and support to continuing training to carry out their technical and pedagogical obligations both in training institutions and in companies?	
16. Competence based/duration	Apprenticeship schemes should be competence-based and have a duration which enables apprentices to attain the appropriate standards to work competently and safely.	Do apprenticeships have a duration consonant with the learning required to carry out an occupation? Do the public authorities produce statistics to show the transition rate from apprenticeship to employment?	
17. Certification and recognition	Apprenticeship schemes should be certified by competent tri-partite bodies to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competence acquired are recognised within the labour market and throughout the education and training system.	Do apprenticeship schemes ensure that social partners are formally involved in the assessment and certification of knowledge, skills and competences required to carry out a recognised occupation?	Ensuring adequate integration of the apprenticeship schemes into the formal education and training system through a system of recognised qualifications and competences which may allow access to higher education and lifelong learning. (3c)

	ETUC Quality Standards	ETUC Quality Criteria (Yes or No?)	Council of the European Union European Alliance for Apprenticeships Guiding Principles
18. Progression	Apprenticeship schemes should offer qualifications which are clearly placed within National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), thus ensuring progression pathways to other NQF levels and programmes	Do apprenticeship schemes provide for qualifications which are formally recognised within National Qualification Frameworks? Do apprenticeship schemes offer qualifications which provide progression pathways from one level to another?	Ensuring... that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs. (3d) Promoting apprenticeship schemes through awareness-raising targeted at young people, their parents, education and training providers, employers and public employment services, while highlighting apprenticeships as a pathway leading to excellence which opens up broad educational and professional opportunities. (3i)
19. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning	Apprenticeship schemes should ensure the recognition of knowledge, skills and competence acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning.	Do apprenticeship schemes recognise knowledge, skills and competence acquired by non-formal and informal learning?	
20. Mobility at the European level	Apprenticeship schemes should include provision for the mobility of apprentices at the national and European levels.	Do apprenticeship schemes provide opportunities for the mobility of apprentices at national and European levels?	Ensuring... that the apprenticeship model is recognised as a valuable learning tool, transferable across borders, opening up the route to progress within national qualifications frameworks and aspiration to high-skilled jobs. (3d)

APPENDIX 2

COUNTRY SUMMARIES

Introduction

Within the context of the study the European Trade Union Confederation, in cooperation with its affiliated organisations, organised a series of meetings and interviews with key stakeholders in 20 Member States, to examine different elements of their apprenticeship systems.

The aim of this section is to present this vast body of information in a simple, concise and comparatively understandable way.

Where data allows, each national summary will provide information about apprenticeships in the following format:

- 1.** A judgment as to whether apprenticeship at the national level corresponds to the definition in the latest edition of *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy* published by CEDEFOP, as follows: *'Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.'*
- 2.** Regulatory framework
- 3.** Social partner involvement
- 4.** Latest statistics, according to apprenticeship starts or overall figures, an indication of recent trends, distribution according to gender, distribution according to age, completion/premature termination rates and retention (transition to work) rates.
- 5.** Levels in National Qualifications Frameworks, with a reference to European Qualifications Framework levels
- 6.** Employment status, and hence the right to join a trade union
- 7.** Remuneration.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

BELGIUM

Initial VET in Belgium includes provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

Belgium has a devolved framework for apprenticeship training, with different systems for the Flemish-, French-, and German-speaking parts.

In Flanders apprenticeship training is based on the System for Learning and Working Act (*Stelsel van Leren en Werken - 2008*), which is in the process of revision. In the French-speaking part, the Cooperation Agreement on Dual Training Act (*Accord de coopération-cadre relatif à la formation en alternance - 2008*) was amended in 2014 and 2015.

According to a definition provided by the National Labour Council, an apprenticeship should take place in the workplace and in a training institution on the basis of a jointly agreed training plan; lead to a vocational qualification; school-based training should last a minimum of 240 hours per year; work-based training should last 20 hours per week on average; a training contract is signed by the employer and the apprentice; the apprentice is remunerated.

The laws make provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training. They are represented on the Board of the Flemish Agency for Vocational Training, and its Practical Committee, which are responsible for the approval of all training plans and qualifications, the implementation of apprenticeship agreements, the quality of training in the workplace and the supervision of in-company mentors. They are represented on the Board of the Walloon Institute for Dual Training in SMEs and of the French-speaking Office for Dual Training., and the Commission which defines occupation profiles for VET,

There is no homogeneous data. Latest figures show that there were 26.018 apprenticeships registered in 2013 (11,783 in Flanders and 14,235 in the French-speaking part), which bears witness to a high level of overall stability since 2008. Between 20% and 33% were women. There is a high level of non-completion - 54 % in 2010/2013 in Wallonia for one of the providers. Where data is available, there is a relatively high level of transition from apprenticeship to work, depending upon the region and the type of apprenticeship undertaken.

It is expected that apprenticeships are classified at Levels 2, 3 and 4 in Flanders and Levels 3 and 4 in Wallonia, which corresponds to similar EQF Levels.

Apprentices do not have a labour contract, but a training contract. They may join a trade union.

In the French-speaking part, apprentices are paid a percentage of the minimum wage: at least 17% in the 1st stage; 24% in the 2nd; and 32% in the 3rd - €255.33, €360.44 and €480.58 respectively. In Flanders they are paid according to age and sectoral agreements, so in construction, they start at €320.39 per month aged 15, rising to €750.91 aged 21, as of 2012.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

BULGARIA

Initial VET in Bulgaria has very limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It provides for a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for vocational education and training in Bulgaria is based on the Vocational Education and Training Act (ЗАКОН ЗА ПРОФЕСИОНАЛНОТО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И ОБУЧЕНИЕ - 1999) which was amended in 2005 and then again in 2014, and also the Craft Act (2001) which regulates the conditions and rules for apprenticeships, including training with a master craftsman.

The newly amended Articles 5 (4), 17a and 59 (9 and 10) of the VET Act open up the possibility for 'education through work'. The ensuing decree provides details about 'the specific form of vocational training for the acquisition of professional qualifications organised on the basis of partnership'. It defines the number of young people that can be trained, the duration of the training, the conditions for the training, the documentation required and the contracts to be agreed between young people and training institutions and between young people and employers. It defines the responsibilities of the employers and the training institutions. It defines requirements for in-company mentors and for assessment. Normally the young person will spend 1 day per week in the workplace in the 1st year, 2 days in year 2 and 3 days in the final year.

In addition the Bulgarian government is in the process of signing an agreement with the Swiss government to set up a partnership to develop training for machinery technicians and dairy production technicians.

Tri-partite partnership is at the heart of the Bulgarian VET system. Social partners have been involved in defining the amendments to the new VET Act and rules for its implementation. Social partners have also been involved recently in the working groups of the National Council for Employment Promotion to contribute to amendments to the Employment Promotion Act. Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on the Management Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, whose functions are, *inter alia*, to cooperate with the social partners in implementing coordinated policies for lifelong learning. (Article 44) Trade unions are also members of its 17 Expert Commissions, 16 of which cover different economic sectors, and one transversal commission for vocational training/career guidance (Articles 49).

The new proposals of the VET Act will enable young people to obtain a secondary school qualification and vocational training certificate at Level 2 and/or 3 on the Bulgarian Qualifications Framework, which correspond to EQF Levels 2 and 3.

Whilst engaged in school-based training young people receive a 10 Lev per day attendance allowance, but when at the workplace they sign a labour contract, receive the minimum wage which from January 2016 is 420 Lev per month. In theory they can join a trade union, but this will need to be tested in practice.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

CYPRUS

Initial VET in Cyprus includes limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It provides for a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Cyprus has its roots in the Apprenticeship Act (1966). In October 2007 the Government revealed 'the chronic problems of the existing apprenticeship system', and on this basis set up the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) which is designed to provide an alternative pathway for educating, training and developing young people who are not in formal education and it is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. It has the following objectives: to provide youth who leave formal education without basic learning competencies or vocational skills, with alternative learning methodologies so that they can develop their learning skills and/or promote their employability; to encourage mobility of youth between education, apprenticeship and employment; to increase the supply of young people with certifiable vocational qualifications in line with the needs of the economy.

It had its first intake in 2012/2013, for car mechanics, and subsequently for electrical installations and hairdressing also. In the *Strategic Plan for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* the Council of Ministers agreed that from September 2015 responsibility for apprenticeship training should be transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture, thus incorporating it into a national pathway programme.

The NMA provides preparatory training of one year, followed by core training for three years. In the latter part here is a fixed ratio between in-company training and school-based training of 60:40 in the first two years: this switches to 80:20 in the third year.

Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on the Apprenticeship Board, which decides upon the specialisations that will be offered in each school year. They have equal representation with employers on the five District Apprenticeship Committees, which monitor the implementation of the system in each District of Cyprus and submit recommendations to the Apprenticeship Board on issues such as the employment of apprentices and apprenticeship contracts, as well as labour market needs.

Latest figures show that in 2013/14 61 young people enrolled in preparatory training and 37 in the 1st Year of the core training.

It is proposed that the apprenticeship qualification is classified at Level 3 in the Cyprus Qualifications Framework, which corresponds to EQF Level 3.

Apprentices sign an apprenticeship contract with the employer, therefore they are not considered as workers. In 2015 they received a payment of €87 per week for the entire period of the apprenticeship.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

CZECH REPUBLIC

Initial VET in the Czech Republic has no provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It is exclusively school-based education, with some provision for work-based learning.

The regulatory framework for Initial VET in the Czech Republic is based on the Education Act (*Zákon o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání – Školský zákon – 2004*, last amended in 2015). Section 65 states that ‘education at a secondary school shall be divided into theoretical teaching and practical training’. The practical training ‘shall be held at schools and school facilities or at the workplaces of natural or legal persons who have been authorised to carry out activities relating to a given area of education and who have entered into an agreement with the relevant school specifying the content and scope of vocational training and conditions upon which it shall be organised’.

In January 2013, the Czech Government adopted a strategy paper entitled *New Measures for fostering Vocational Education and Training* which aimed to encourage secondary school students to take up vocational education and training, to encourage permeability between the different types of education and training, to encourage cooperation between the different actors involved in VET, and to improve the quality of teachers and trainers.

There is very limited involvement of social partners in the design and implementation of vocational education and training. Some effort has been recently made to enhance the role of employers’ participation in VET but this has not been extended to trade unions. There is some limited provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of Continuing VET through participation in sector skills councils, but no provision for trade union involvement in Initial VET.

Initial VET qualifications are offered at Levels 2 (secondary education with a vocational certificate) – for students with special needs), 3 and 4 in the Czech Qualifications Framework, which correspond to EQF Levels 3 and 4.

If Initial VET students carry out an internship, they do not sign a contract with an employer, are not considered as workers and on this basis may not join a trade union. The minimal amount of remuneration for an internship for a 40 hour working week is 30 per cent of the minimum salary, which in 2016 stood at 9,900 Czech Koruna per month.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

DENMARK

Initial VET in Denmark has a broad-based and well regarded system of apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes some school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Denmark is to be found in the Vocational Education and Training Act (*Erhvervsuddannelsesloven* - 2013). There is no specific legal definition of apprenticeship, but an explanation of what apprenticeship training should provide (Article 1) - vocational qualifications which are formally recognised by and in demand on the labour market, and possibilities for lifelong learning and for active citizenship.

Following discussions between the Government and the social partners, a new reform entitled *Improving Vocational Education and Training* was adopted in 2014. It proposes the following: the introduction of a minimum entry requirement in Danish and mathematics; the opportunity to specialise more gradually, by reducing the twelve vocational access routes to four broader areas and by introducing a foundation course; and opportunities for young people to obtain a general upper-secondary qualification offering access to higher education.

Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on the Board of the National Council of Vocational Education and Training which is responsible for providing advice to the Minister on the overall regulation of apprenticeship training. They are members of the sectoral 'trade committees' - 50 in all - which lay down the detailed content of training, and more specifically the duration and structure of training programmes, their objectives and assessment, and the distribution between work-based training and school-based education. They are also involved in the accreditation of companies for apprenticeships. At local level they appoint members to VET committees which advise on local labour market needs.

Most apprenticeships last 3.5 to 4 years. The ratio between work-based training and school-based education is 70%: 30%.

Latest figures show that in 2015 the figure for apprentices stood at 69,669 - a small reduction of 3% compared with 2014. Of these 43% were women. In November 2015, 20% of the apprentices were 15-19 year olds, 41% 20-24, 39% were older. Figures for 2014 show that the completion rate is 52%. The transition rate into work stood at 81%.

Most apprenticeships are classified at Levels 3 and 4 in the Danish Qualifications Framework, which correspond to EQF Levels 3 and 4.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices are paid in line with the different collective agreements, but generally 40-50% of the minimum wage of a skilled worker at the outset, rising to 80% at the end of the apprenticeship. So, for example, as of March 2015 a 1st year apprentice metalworker would be paid 65.45 krone an hour and for the 4th year 92.20 krone.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

ESTONIA

Initial VET in Estonia includes very limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It consists mainly of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Estonia is based on the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus* – 2013). This Act underlines the importance of learning outcomes approach (Article 22), defines the parameters for curriculum development (Article 23) and lays down qualification requirements for pedagogical staff (Article 39). A follow-up Regulation lays down the arrangements for implementing work-based learning (*Töökohapõhise õppe rakendamise kord* – 2013).

Apprenticeships vary in duration, from six months to four years, depending upon the apprentices' initial level of education attainment, but generally take 3-3.5 years to complete. According to the new Act, where there is work-based training, it should constitute at least two thirds of the curriculum.

Trade unions have a limited involvement in the design of apprenticeship training, via the activities of the Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) which was established in August 2001 to organise and coordinate the activities of sector skills councils, to keep the register of occupational qualifications, to organise the development and updating of occupational qualification standards on the basis of decisions made by the 16 sector skills councils. The Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation (TALO) and the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions (EAKL) are both represented on its Supervisory Board. Sectoral trade unions are active in some of the sector skills councils whose role is to make proposals for developing and updating occupational standards and to approve the procedure for awarding occupational qualifications.

In 2014/2015 there were 617 people engaged in apprenticeship training, a small increase in comparison with previous years. There are plans to increase this figure to 1,000 in 2016. 38% are women. 4% are under 19; 24% are 20-24; and most, 72%, are over 25. Latest figures (2014/2015) show a non-completion rate of 23%.

VET qualifications are offered at Levels 2-5 in the Estonian Qualifications Framework, and apprenticeship qualifications are classified at Levels 3-4, which correspond to EQF Level 3-4.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer and a training provider, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. According to the Implementation Regulation apprentices cannot be paid less than the minimum legal wage (€ 430 per month in 2016) during the period of work-based training and may receive a grant for the period of school-based training.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

FRANCE

Initial VET in France includes the provision of apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in France is based on the Labour Code, which was amended in 2014 by the Vocational Training, Employment and Social Democracy Law (*Loi relative à la formation professionnelle, à l'emploi et à la démocratie sociale*), itself based on a national multi-sectoral agreement signed by the social partners in December 2013. Speaking at the 3rd Grand Social conference in 2014, the French President announced a series of measures to develop apprenticeship training, including a target of 500,000 apprentices by 2017.

An apprenticeship aims to provide young people who have completed formal compulsory schooling with general, theoretical and practical training, so as to obtain a vocational qualification. It is based on the principle of shared responsibility for theoretical education in an apprentice training centre and vocational training at the workplace. Apprenticeships last for 1 to 3 years, according to the type of occupation and qualification chosen, but most last 2 years.

The law makes provision for wide-ranging trade union involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training, by means of formal participation in bodies such as the National Council for Employment, Vocational Training and Guidance. At the sectoral level, social partners manage the accredited agencies (OPCA in French) that collect the apprenticeship tax and are responsible for the way in which this tax is redistributed in terms of apprenticeship training.

Latest figures show that there were 273,295 apprenticeship starts in 2013 – a reduction on the figures for 2010, 2011 and 2012. (In addition there 9,440 apprenticeship starts in the public sector). 33.7% were women. 52% were under 19; 30% between 19 and 21 and 18% 22 and over. The non-completion rate for apprenticeship contracts signed in 2011-2012 was 27%. 67% of apprentices were in employment 7 months after finishing their apprenticeship in 2013.

In 2012 42% of apprenticeships were offered at Level V in the French Qualifications Framework, 27% at Level IV, and 29% at Levels I to III; these correspond to EQF Levels 3, 4 and 5-8 respectively. In addition, a further 2% were offered at pre-apprenticeship level.

Apprentices sign a contract with the employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union.

Apprentices are paid a percentage of the National Minimum Wage, or of the minimum wage in the appropriate sectoral agreement, if higher; this is dependent upon age and progression through the training cycle, so an apprentice under 18 in his/her 1st year would be entitled to 25% and an apprentice 21 and over in his/her 3rd year 78%. The National Minimum Wage was set in January 2016 at €1,466.62 per month, so the former could expect to be paid €366.66 and the latter €1,143.96.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

GERMANY

Initial VET in Germany has a broad-based and well regarded system of apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes provision for a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Germany is to be found in the Vocational Training Act (2005) (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* - BBIG), which, *inter alia*, covers the content and structure of training, the responsibilities of all stakeholders, remuneration, assessment, conditions for training institutions and trainers. According to Section 1.3 of the Act, an apprenticeship should, 'through a systematic training programme, impart the professional skills, knowledge and qualifications (vocational competence) which are necessary to engage in a form of skills occupational activity in a changing working world'.

The German government and social partners agreed a strategy entitled Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015-2018 which contained a series of measures to prepare young people better for their occupation and the world of work.

Social partnership is central to the German apprenticeship system, and the law makes provision for wide-ranging trade union involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training, by means of formal participation in education and training bodies at all levels: at the national level, as members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, which is often described as Germany's VET Parliament; at the regional level, within Regional Committees for Vocational Training; and the local level, within Vocational Training Committees of the 'Competent Bodies', which are responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring apprenticeship training (supervising training institutions, assessing trainers, and organising examinations) and providing advisory services for apprenticeship training.

Latest figures show that in 2014 there were 522,232 apprenticeship starts in Germany. This represents a reduction on overall figures for 2009 (564,307) to 2013. 40.1 % of them were women. Figures for 2013 show that 43% were under 19; 35.7% were aged 19-21; and 21.3% were 22 and older. The non-completion rate for apprenticeship contracts signed in 2013 was 25%. Two thirds of apprentices who finished in 2013 were kept on by their employers. In addition, 22,428 passed the assessment to become a Master craftsman (*Meister*) in 2014.

In 2013 8% of apprenticeships were classified at Level 3, 92% % at Level 4, corresponding EQF Levels 3 and 4 respectively. The Master craftsman qualification is classified at Level 6.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. In Germany apprentices' pay is covered by sectoral agreements. The rates vary accordingly, and for example in 2014, the highest was an average of €1,030 per month in the construction industry (€690 in the 1st year, €1,060 in the 2nd and €1,339 in the 3rd) and the lowest €474 per month for apprentice hairdressers (€379 in 1st year, €472 in the 2nd year and €573 in the 3rd).

COUNTRY SUMMARY

GREECE

Initial VET in Greece includes limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It provides for a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Greece is based primarily on the Lifelong Learning Act (3879/2010), the Secondary Education Act (4186/2013) and the Secondary Education Reform Act (4310/2014). The former provides for the establishment of vocational education schools (SEK in Greek) which offer a combination of school-based training in the first two years and work-based training in the third year. The second provides for school-based education in vocational upper secondary schools for the first three years and an optional year of work-based training in the fourth year. The third provides for a three year cycle of vocational high schools followed by a fourth year in the workplace (3+1). Currently, apprenticeship training takes place under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour through the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED in Greek) or through the Ministry of Tourism.

The three Acts have very limited provision for the involvement of the social partners in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training, given that they only take part in committees that provide feedback on the regional and sectoral needs of the national economy. Moreover these committees have not met since 2010, when the first Lifelong Learning Act was passed. Social partners are however members of the Board of Directors of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP in Greek) which is responsible for defining occupation profiles.

It is expected that SEK apprenticeship training will be classified at level 3 in the Greek Qualifications Framework which corresponds to EQF Level 3. The vocational upper secondary school training is to be offered at level 4 for the school-based training and at level 5 once the work-based training is successfully completed. This corresponds to EQF Levels 4 and 5.

In the Apprenticeship Schools apprentices sign a contract with an employer and the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation for the entire period of the work-based training. However they are not entitled to join a trade union. Apprentices receive a wage for the time spent in the workplace. It corresponds to 70% of the minimum wage (currently €10.95 per hour for unmarried people under 25 years of age). There is anecdotal evidence that some employers do not pay this amount.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

IRELAND

Initial VET in Ireland includes the provision of apprenticeships which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Ireland is based primarily on the Apprentices Act (1959), Industrial Training Act (1967) and the Labour Services Act (1987/2009). Traditionally Ireland has offered apprenticeships in a number of designated occupations (25, in 2015). In 2013 a *Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland* proposed the following definition for apprenticeships - 'a programme of structured learning which formally combines and alternates learning in the work place with learning in an education or training centre... whose completion prepares the participant for a specific occupation and leads to a qualification nationally recognised under the National Framework of Qualifications at any level from Level 5 upwards' (EQF Level 4).

For a programme to be classified as an apprenticeship at entry level, it should have a duration of no less than two years, and the structure of the programme should provide for more than 50% work-based learning. The Apprenticeship Implementation Plan, published in June 2014, provides for the establishment of an Apprenticeship Council and a three-phase approach; renewing apprenticeships and identifying new opportunities; developing the proposals; and embedding the structures. It proposes the enactment of legislation to establish the Apprenticeship Council and underpin the new apprenticeship system for 2016.

The new reforms provide for formal trade union involvement in the Apprenticeship Council, whose function is to advise on the 'design, duration, entry levels and ongoing provision of apprenticeships in line with national needs'; on the introduction of apprenticeships in new occupations and promote progression pathways; on numbers of apprenticeships to be provided in various occupations based on sound labour market intelligence and manpower forecasting.

Latest figures show that in 2014 there were 2,698 apprenticeship registrations in Ireland. Only 13 were women (0.5%). 22% were under 19, 66% between 19 and 24; and 12% were 25 and older. This is a substantial increase on the overall figures for 2012, 2011 and 2010, but far less than the figures for 2008 (3,765) and 2007 (6,763). In contrast the non-completion rate has declined from 22% in 2010 to 8% in 2013 and 4% in 2014.

Existing (statutory) apprenticeship qualifications are classified at Level 6 within the National Framework of Qualifications (EQF Level 5). The new generation of apprenticeships following on from the recent review will be classified at Level 5, EQF Level 4.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices' pay is regulated by national collective agreements. According to the employment agreement in the electrical contracting industry, for example, 1st year apprentices are paid 30% of the national rate for craftsmen; 2nd years 45%; 3rd years 65%; and 4th years 80% - ie, 6.22, 9.33, €13.48 and €16.59 per hour respectively for 2015.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

ITALY

Initial VET in Italy includes the provision of apprenticeships which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

According to Article 117 of the Italian Constitution, the State has exclusive legislative powers for education, whilst the Regions are responsible for VET. This has led to the development of a confusing and fragmented national picture.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Italy is based on the 2011 'Consolidated Act on Apprenticeships' (*Testo Unico sull'Apprendistato*). This Law defines an apprenticeship as 'an employment contract for an indefinite period designed for the training and employment of young people' (article 1.1). It makes provision for three types of apprenticeship: apprenticeship for acquiring a vocational qualification or diploma; professional apprenticeship; higher education and research apprenticeship. It led to the creation of a national catalogue of occupational profiles on the basis of collective agreements and professional standards defined at sectoral and/or regional levels. In 2015, the 'Jobs Act' introduced changes designed to overcome the differences in regulation between regions, to move the focus from companies to public training institutions, thus strengthening aspects of school-based training, and to do away with age limits for professional apprenticeships for the unemployed.

The 2011 Law handed over responsibility for governance to the social partners, on the basis of agreements signed by representative trade unions and employers' organisations. Sectoral agreements stipulate rights and responsibilities, define the length of the apprenticeships, set out the training arrangements for acquiring occupational skills and expertise in relation to occupational profiles. For the professional apprenticeship, this generally meant a 3-year programme with 40 hours off-the job training per year in transversal skills.

Latest figures show that in 2013 there were 451,954 apprentices in Italy, mostly for professional apprenticeships (91%). 43% were women. 1% was under 18; 56% were aged 19 to 24; 35% 25 to 29; and 8% were 30 and older. This is a considerable reduction compared with figures for 2012 (470,056), 2011 (492,490) and 2010 (528,183). In 2012 around 161,000 apprentices were hired permanently at the end of their contracts. (-10,8% compared to 2011).

On successful completion of the professional apprenticeship young people obtain a certificate which is recognised for professional purposes by the social partners but not yet by the education authorities and so is not referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices' pay is decided by collective agreements. They may be promoted up to the pay scale to within two levels of the maximum decided by the collective agreement for that pay grade, if they are carrying out the duties or functions of a skilled worker. As an alternative they may be paid on a percentage basis.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

LATVIA

Initial VET in Latvia provides school-based training which incorporates an element of work-based training, part of which takes place in a company. It also has very limited provision for a form of apprenticeship in the craft sector.

The regulatory framework for IVET training in Latvia is based on the Vocational Education Law (1999). The content of the IVET programmes is defined by relevant state vocational education standards through the Cabinet 'Regulations on the state vocational secondary education standard and the state vocational education standard' (2008) and the relevant occupational standards. The regulatory framework for the apprenticeship in the craft sector is to be found in the Crafts Act (1993), which in addition defines a craft apprentice as 'someone who has joined a craft company or an education institution and signed a training contract'.

The law makes provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of IVET in Latvia. The Vocational Education Law states that sector skills councils, trade unions, and other public organisations have the right, *inter alia*, to participate in the definition of occupational standards and educational programmes; and to participate in the provision and evaluation of the quality of VET. This work is done by the Vocational Education and Employment Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council which is made up of equal numbers of representatives from the trade unions, employers' organisations and Ministries. In addition tri-partite sectoral expert committees (12 in total) were set up in 2011, to ensure that, *inter alia*, the quality and content of vocational training corresponds to the needs of the labour market. The Latvian Chamber of Crafts is solely responsible for vocational training in the craft sector.

Latest figures show that in 2014/15 there were 29,855 young people involved in vocational training in Latvia. This represents a significant year-on-year reduction since the 2008/09 figures (38,819). 43 % of them were women. Latest figures from the Latvian Chamber of Crafts show that approximately 50 craft apprentices passed the journeymen/women examinations in 2014 – a very significant drop since the late 2000s. The non-completion rate in IVET is high - 55% - 11,478 students started the 1st year of their courses (in 2010/11) but only 5,154 completed the 4th year (in 2014/2015).

IVET qualifications are classified at Level 2 and 3 in the Latvian Qualifications Framework (EQF Level 3 and 4). Craft qualifications are recognised in the craft sector but not in the formal education system and so are not incorporated in the Latvian Qualifications Framework.

Craft apprentices sign a training contract with employers, but not a labour contract, and are not considered as workers and on this basis may not join a trade union. The question of pay for craft apprentices and for IVET students on work placements is not regulated. Evidence suggests that some are paid. The minimum wage in Latvia (2015) is €360 per month.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

LITHUANIA

Initial VET in Lithuania provides school-based training which incorporates an element of work-based training, part of which takes place in a company.

The regulatory framework for IVET training in Lithuania is to be found in the Law on Vocational Education (last amended in 2011) (*Profesinio mokymo įstatymas*). The law states that apprenticeship training 'is carried out in the workplace... Theoretical training may be performed at a vocational training establishment or in any other school' (Article 2). An Order from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour defines VET contracts and their registration procedures, as well as describing the details of apprenticeship contracts and obligations of apprentices, companies and VET providers. However further enabling laws are still under discussion.

According to Article 28 of the Law on Vocational Education, the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) have extensive formal powers. They participate in the work of the Vocational Education Council of Lithuania (*Profesinio mokymo taryba*) that advises national education authorities on strategic VET issues, most notably on which sectors to develop. In addition they are members of the Central Professional Committee (*Centrinis profesinis komitetas*) that coordinates strategic issues regarding the development of qualifications systems and the accreditation of training institutions. They are also members of the 17 sectoral professional committees that set occupational standards.

Latest figures show that in 2014/15 there were IVET 23,278 starts and 46,462 young people enrolled overall. This represents an increase on 2008/09 figures (43,818). The non-completion rate in IVET is relatively high - in 2014/15 16,177 completed their training. There is no statistical information for the numbers of apprentices.

IVET qualifications are classified primarily at Level 4 in the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (EQF Level 4).

According to the Law on Vocational Education, 'when applying the apprenticeship form, a provider of vocational education shall conclude employment and vocational education contracts' (Article 15.3). Young people can join a trade union.

Apprentices' pay is calculated according to companies' wages, as defined in the contractual agreement between the company and the apprentice, and/or indirect costs (materials, trainers' time).

COUNTRY SUMMARY

LUXEMBOURG

Initial VET in Luxembourg has a well-developed system of apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes provision for a variety of school-based training.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training is to be found in the Reform of Vocational Education and Training Act (2008), which, *inter alia*, covers the responsibilities of all stakeholders, remuneration, assessment and conditions for in-company training. According to Article 2, a formal apprenticeship is 'carried out in an organised and structured context in an education/training institution or at the workplace and designed explicitly as an apprenticeship in terms of objectives, time and resources'. The ratio of in-company to school-based training varies according to the sector, but in-company training is in the majority.

The Act makes provision for social partner involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training. VET in Luxembourg is based on a partnership between the State and the Chambers representing employers' and employees' organisations that are responsible for the training. The planning and implementation is overseen by a Committee for Vocational Training which is composed of a series of stakeholders including the Chambers. More specifically in terms of apprenticeship training, the social partners, via the Chambers, are members of curriculum teams that are responsible for drawing up occupational standards, training profiles and training curricula. In addition they are responsible for drawing up the criteria and procedures for the assessment of apprentices. They are also responsible for the accreditation of workplaces for apprenticeship training.

Latest figures show that overall there were 4,084 apprentices in 2012-13 in Luxembourg. This represents a reduction on overall figures for 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2009. Of these 1,495 started in 2012/13. The non-completion rate is very high - for those apprentices who started in 2010-11 29.7% of them obtained their qualification. Other figures show that three years after finishing their apprenticeships 81% were in employment.

Apprenticeships are placed at Level 2 (*certificat de capacité professionnelle - CCP*) and Level 3 (*diplôme d'aptitude professionnelle - DAP*) in the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework. These levels correspond to EQF Levels 2 and 3 respectively. The prestigious Master craftsman qualification is placed at Level 5.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer and are entitled to join a trade union. In Luxembourg apprentices' pay is fixed according to the type of qualification, the year of study, success in assessment, and the sector. For example in 2014, an apprentice hairdresser would receive €635.33 per month in the 1st Year of a Level 2 certificate (CCP), €807.65 in the 2nd Year and €1,023.00 in the 3rd Year, and an apprentice bricklayer would receive €689.20, €861.52 and €1,033.84 respectively; if on a Level 3 diploma (DAP), the former would receive €772.61 initially and €1,214.15 after passing the intermediate assessment, and the latter would receive €861.52 and €1,292.20 respectively.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

NETHERLANDS

Initial VET in the Netherlands includes the provision of apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

There are two pathways for gaining a qualification: the work-based pathway, (*beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL*) and the school-based pathway (*beroepsopleidende leerweg – BOL*). The originality of the Dutch system lies in the fact that the qualifications are the same and of equal value, and so it is possible to switch from one to another. BBL apprentices spend a minimum of 60% of their time at the workplace, and BOL students spend a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 59% of their time in the workplace.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training is based on the 1995 Education and Vocational Training Act (*Wet Educatie en Beroepsopvoeding*). Apprenticeship training focuses on the theoretical and practical preparation for the pursuit of a profession for which a vocational qualification is necessary or appropriate. Apprenticeship training also promotes general education and personal development and contributes to society (Article 1.2.1.2). Apprenticeships vary in duration. They can take two, three or four years, depending upon the level.

The system is in a state of transition. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science handed over a central advisory role to a new foundation, 'Cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market' (SBB in Dutch) in August 2015. The SBB is responsible for labour market research, the development and maintenance of the qualifications structure and the accreditation of work placement companies.

Social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) are closely involved in the design and implementation of apprenticeship training. At the national level they have equal representation on the Board of the SBB, on its Advisory Committees (qualifications and examinations, work placement and effectiveness) and on its 8 wide-ranging sector chambers.

Latest figures show that there were 102,661 BBL apprentices (and 377,196 BOL students) in 2014/15. 37% were women. 55% were under 24; 17% between 24 and 30; and a significant number (28%) over 30. This represents a significant reduction, down from 167,091 in 2009/2010. The latest figure for BBL non-completion is 6.86%. 95% of BBL apprentices were in paid employment 18 months after finishing their apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships are offered at Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the Dutch Qualifications Framework which correspond to EQF Levels 1-4.

BBL apprentices normally sign a work contract with an employer and may join a trade union.

BBL apprentices are paid according to the rates agreed in sectoral agreements, or, when employed in companies not covered by sectoral agreements, the minimum legal wage. Most BBL apprentices receive 100–130 % of the minimum wage, which ranges from €475.40 to €1,524.60 per month, according to age (from 1 January 2016).

COUNTRY SUMMARY

POLAND

Contrary to the information in the European Commission publication *Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union* there is provision for apprenticeship training in Poland that corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition, in the craft sector. The vast majority of Initial VET in Poland is however school-based training.

The basis for the regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Poland is to be found in Chapter 9 of the Labour Code. The Council of Ministers shall establish by regulation the terms and conditions of vocational training and the principles of remuneration of juvenile workers during this period (Article 191). The contract of employment for vocational training for young people shall define in particular the type of vocational training (apprenticeship or training for a particular job), the duration and place of vocational training, the manner of theoretical training, and the level of remuneration (Article 195).

There is little provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of IVET. There is some form of participation in education and training bodies at the sectoral level, notably the mining and steelmaking sector skills councils. Within the Operational Programme there have been initiatives to involve social partners in the establishment of qualifications frameworks in five sectors – financial services, sport, tourism, telecommunications and information technology. In addition, in the craft sector, employers are involved in developing assessment standards and overseeing assessment practices.

According to data provided by the Polish Craft Association, there were 76,045 apprenticeship craftsmen/women overall in 2013. This represents a reduction on overall figures for 2012, 2011 and, 2010; and 2009, for example, when the figure stood at 93,814. 31% of apprentices in the craft sector were women. The figure for non-completion stood at approximately 5%.

It has been agreed that journeymen apprenticeships in the craft sector are to be classified at Level 3 (EQF Level 3). Discussions are still in process for the master apprenticeship.

Apprentices in the craft sector sign a contract with an employer which contains certain minimum requirements, and are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union.

In Poland craft apprentices' pay is calculated in terms of a percentage of the average pay for the previous 3 months. A 1st year apprentices receives 4% of this sum, a 2nd year 5% and a 3rd year 6%. On average this means approximately €50 per month.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

ROMANIA

Initial VET in Romania includes the provision for apprenticeships and dual training, both of which correspond to the CEDEFOP definition. The vast majority of Initial VET is still school-based training.

The regulatory framework for VET in Romania is based on two different laws, for dual training and for apprenticeships.

The National Education Law (2011) defines dual education as 'a form of developing vocational education, combining a contract of work and professional training offered by a company, with training offered by education centres. The responsibility for organizing and function is shared between the company and the schools' (Article 25.4). The Ministry of Education, in consultation with employers, regulates the organisation and functioning of vocational education in the dual system, the duration and content of training programmes, and the organisation and conduct of the assessments. The dual system is based on training standards approved by the Ministry of Education or occupational standards approved by the National Qualifications Authority. Dual training may last one, two or three years.

In addition, the Apprenticeship Law (2005), which was amended in 2013 to respond to employers' concerns on costs, defines an apprenticeship as 'an individual fixed-term contract of employment... according to which an apprentice is professionally obliged to learn and work for and under the authority of an employer who in turn is obliged to ensure the payment of wages and appropriate training conditions' (Article 4.1). Apprenticeships should last no more than 3 years and no less than 12 months. 30% of the apprenticeship is school-based.

Limited social partner involvement in the design and implementation of a part of the Romanian VET system centres on the National Authority for Qualifications which is responsible for, *inter alia*, managing the National Qualifications Register, the National Register of Adult Training Providers, accrediting evaluation centres, regulating the training market, and coordinating the activities of the Sectoral Committees. One of the 32 members of its Management Committee represents the interest of trade unions.

Latest figures show that there were approximately 500 apprenticeship starts in 2015, up from 340 in 2014. It is expected that this number will increase significantly, once the Operational Programme for Human Capital has been authorised. There are no figures for dual training, as the Ministerial Ordinance for the implementation of the Law has still not been agreed.

It is expected that apprenticeships are placed at Levels 1, 2 and 3 in the Romanian Qualifications Framework, which are equivalent to EQF Level 2, 3 and 4.

Apprentices are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. They should be paid a basic monthly salary which is at least equal to the minimum gross salary in the country, which was increased to 1,050 Lei in June 2015.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

SLOVENIA

Initial VET in Slovenia has very limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. The vast majority of IVET is school-based, with some work-based elements.

The basis for the regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Slovenia is to be found in the Vocational Education Act (*Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju* – 2006). There is no specific definition of apprenticeship as such, but, according to Article 2, a series of aims, one of which is to provide the knowledge, skills and vocational competences required to carry out an occupation and to access further education. There are ongoing discussions to see if it is possible to promulgate a specific law for apprenticeship training.

Vocational upper secondary education lasts 3 years. 40% of the educational programme is devoted to practical training. Part of this training is done in inter-company education centres, and another part – at least 24 weeks and not more than 53 weeks over a 3 year period – can be carried out in companies.

There is provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of IVET. Trade unions are represented on the 10 sector committees for establishing occupational standards. Trade unions have four (out of 14) representatives on the Expert Council for Vocational Education and Training (*Strokovnega sveta Republike Slovenije za poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje*), which is responsible, inter alia for defining the scope and content of education in lower and secondary vocational education carried out by the employer, determining the organisation of the implementation of the education programme and determining the content of mid-term assessment. In addition trade unions may put forward their representatives to participate in the final assessment process.

The Slovenian Qualifications Framework is in the process of being approved, and it is proposed that apprenticeship qualifications are classified at Level 4, equivalent to EQF Level 4.

Apprentices sign an individual learning contract with an employer. Although this contract is not an employment contracts, apprentices may join a trade union.

In Slovenia pay for the period worked in the company is covered by sectoral agreements. If defined in a sectoral agreement, it is set at 15% of an average monthly wage in Slovenia for the previous month, and in June 2015 this stood at €1,539, for example, in the metalworking sector.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

SPAIN

Initial VET in Spain includes limited provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CE-DEFOP definition. The vast majority is school-based training.

Responsibilities are shared between the national and the regional levels, which means that there are different systems and practices throughout Spain.

The regulatory basis is to be found in a Royal Decree (2012), which provides for two types of work-based learning – contracts for training and apprenticeship, and dual vocational training in the education system. The section on the former (Chapter II), which has subsequently been complemented by a regulation from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (ESS/41/2015), establishes certain basic requirements: as regards *inter alia*, working time, salaries, the duration of the contract, training activities, the duration of the training, mentors, training agreements, certification and finances. The section on the latter (Chapter III) lays down certain basic requirements: as regards *inter alia*, training institutions, training programmes, agreements with workplaces, rights and responsibilities, remuneration and assessment.

Trade unions, along with the employers' organisations, are formally consulted on the broad legal aspects of the VET system via the General Council for Vocational Training which has 77 members, 19 of which represent trade unions. However their real involvement is limited. Spanish trade unions are critical of the conditions for training in contracts and do not consider these initiatives as real apprenticeships, because, *inter alia*, the training activities may be developed through distance learning with no formal recognition and no contact with any kind of training centre or school, and the tutor is simply their supervisor at work.

Latest figures show that in 2014/15 there were 139,864 young people involved in contracts for training and apprenticeship and in 2014 16,199 participants in dual vocational training in the education system. This represents a significant increase on the previous two years – 106,101 and 60,584 for the former, and 9,801 and 4,292 for the latter. In the latter the share of people over 20 years of age has increased to 87%. By increasing contracts in the services sector, women's participation has increased to 50%. The rate for transition from contracts for training and apprenticeship to an open-ended (indefinite) work rate is a mere 2%.

The Spanish Qualifications Framework (SQF) is in the process of being agreed. However the certificates obtained by the contracts for training and apprenticeship are not recognised by the Ministry of Education and so would not be integrated into the SQF.

Young people with contracts are considered workers and so may join a trade union. As for pay, where a contract exists, remuneration is established in a collective agreement and cannot in any case be lower than the inter-professional minimum wage (€648 in October 2015) in line with the hours that have been worked (Article 9 of the Royal Decree). For those in dual vocational training in the education system, there is no employment contract, and so remuneration is not compulsory, although discretionary scholarships may be paid.

COUNTRY SUMMARY

UNITED KINGDOM

Initial VET in the United Kingdom includes provision for apprenticeship training which corresponds to the CEDEFOP definition. It also includes a variety of school-based training.

The United Kingdom has a devolved framework for apprenticeship training, with different systems for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in England and Wales, for example, is based on The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009). In England the system has been under review, and an implementation plan (2013) has defined an apprenticeship as 'a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills'. The minimum length for all apprenticeships will now be 12 months. The government pledged to set a target of 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020, to introduce an apprenticeship levy by April 2017, to require all bids for government contracts worth more than £10 million to contain a commitment to apprenticeships and to protect the term 'apprenticeship' by law, to prevent its potential misuse.

Although the new 'employer-led' reforms make no formal provision for trade union participation in the design and implementation of apprenticeships, trade unions have in fact been involved, for example, in the paper and print industry.

Latest figures show that in 2014/15 there were 494,200 apprenticeship starts in England. Women make up 53% of this figure; they are under-represented in certain well paid sectors such as engineering and significantly over-represented in sectors such as hairdressing and child care. Only 25% were under 19; 32% were 19-24 years old; 43% were 25 and older, most probably workers joining apprenticeship schemes with their existing employers. This is a significant increase on the previous year but less than 2012/13 and 2011/2012. The mean completion rate for the period August 2011 to March 2012 was 89%. The mean retention rate was estimated at 73%.

65% of apprenticeships were classified in 2013/14 at 'Intermediate' level (Level 2 within the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England, Northern Ireland and Wales), 33% 'Advanced' (Level 3), and 2% 'Higher' (Level 4), corresponding to EQF Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Apprentices should normally sign a contract of employment with an employer, are considered as employees and on this basis may join a trade union.

There is a National Minimum Wage for apprentices which in 2015 stood at £3.30 per hour for under-19s and for over-19s in their first year of apprenticeship. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age. There is evidence however that some employers are not paying the National Minimum Wage. Where there is a collective agreement (e.g. in electrical contracting), apprentices would expect to receive substantially more – for example, £4.13 per hour while attending a training institution and £4.69 at the workplace in the first year.

APPENDIX 3

SECTORAL SUMMARIES

Introduction

Within the context of the study the European Trade Union Confederation, in cooperation with the social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions) at the European level, organised four specific seminars to examine the challenges facing the different sectors. The sectors chosen were education, construction, electricity supply and hairdressing.

Education sector

Education is a relatively atypical sector, in that generally it does not offer places for apprentices. It is however interesting because the sector contains the training providers, the training institutions that are responsible for providing off-the-job training corresponding to the needs of the apprentices, the labour market and society at large. In addition training institutions are often called upon to find places in companies for apprentices or to provide substitute work-based training for those apprentices that are unable to find places.

Moreover, on the trade union side, the sector often provides representatives who, because of their specific expertise, are often delegated to represent broader trade union organisations in governance issues. All in all the sector lies at the heart of apprenticeship quality assurance systems.

A central issue for the education sector is the quality of teachers and trainers in training institutions and of mentors in the workplace. There is a mosaic of different approaches within the European Union, and initial qualification requirements and continuing training vary considerably, but some trends are emerging.

In terms of initial/pre-service training general subject teachers are usually university graduates with a supplementary teaching qualification or graduates with a qualification in teaching; vocational subject trainers generally have a certain number of years of professional experience and some form of teaching qualification obtained either before or more often after being recruited and within a certain time period. In terms of continuing/in-service training, a particularly important issue for apprenticeships, there is often a requirement for teachers and trainers to keep their skills up to date. In some Member States - Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Slovakia, for example – this is compulsory, and they are entitled to take a certain number of days training per year to do this. Evidence suggests though that access is limited, and considerably more support is required to enable teachers and trainers to remain abreast of the constant innovations and changes to production processes in the different sectors.

In general terms there are very few training requirements for in-company mentors. In some Member States however, for example in Denmark, Germany and Luxembourg, they are required to be master craftsmen, and one of the requirements to become a master craftsman is the development of ability to conduct training.

A key issue is better cooperation between training institutions and companies, one of the recommendations of the ETUCE policy paper on vocational education and training in Europe.

The European social partners for the sector, the European Trade Union Committee for Education and the European Federation of Educational Employers have made a pledge to support the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

Construction sector

The European construction sector has traditionally provided apprenticeships for different occupations: bricklayers; painters; plumbers; plasterers; decorators; carpenters; joiners; scaffolders; electricians; crane drivers; tilers; roofers; heating engineers and plant fitters.

The sector has been particularly hard hit by the financial crisis. The annual growth rate for construction in the EU-28 fell by 7.7% in 2009, 4.2% in 2010, 1.25% in 2011, 5.25% in 2012 and 2.3% in 2013. Moreover this downturn in construction activity was widespread throughout the EU-28, illustrated by the fact that every EU Member State experienced at least two years of contraction during the period 2009–13. The number of persons employed in the sector has plummeted.

This has had a disastrous impact on apprenticeship training. In times of economic downturn apprentices are not taken on in the first place, or taken on and then made redundant. In Ireland, for example, one of the Member States worst affected, there were 2,762 apprentices in construction in 2011 and more (2,855) redundant apprentices. By 2015 the figure had fallen to 1,471 for the former and 633 for the latter. Registrations as of February 2015 stood at 104. In the United Kingdom the number of apprenticeship starts has declined by 23% from 2009/2010 to 2013/2014.

A central issue for apprenticeship in the construction sector is clearly a return to economic growth which will help to encourage a willingness to take on new apprentices. Another issue is to retain the expertise in the training institutions that would be required to accompany increase in apprentice numbers in the future.

The European social partners, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the European Construction Industry Federation, have worked together on a number of joint projects, notably the Bricklayer project, which examined the problems likely to be encountered in the implementation of the EQF and ECET given that bricklaying qualifications in Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Poland cover different activities and knowledge requirements. They have also set up a website (<http://www.construction-for-youth.eu/en/>) to present best practices at the national level as regards initiatives to enable young people to find work.

In the context of Construction 2020, the European Commission launched a communication campaign targeted at the construction sector to attract young people and improve the image of the sector. It also aims to encourage the construction industry to offer more and better apprenticeships.

The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the European Construction Industry Federation have made a pledge to support the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

Electricity supply sector

In terms of production, transmission and distribution, the electricity power generation industry is relatively stable. The number of persons employed in the sector in the European Union is around 735,000, a little less than in 2009. However the sector is facing a different type of challenge – the transition to a low-carbon economy, which will have a major impact on jobs and skills in the industry.

In response the European social partners for the sector, the European Public Sector Union, IndustriAll and Eurelectric adopted a joint framework of action 'Competencies, qualifications and anticipation of change in the European electricity sector' in 2013. They agreed on the importance of identifying early the competencies and qualifications that are needed in order to ensure a high quality service.

They are in the process of mapping existing skills, qualifications and labour market research bodies. There are many developments that contribute to the creation of jobs such as smart grids, energy efficiency measures and the rapid expansion of the renewable sector, and it is key that young people acquire appropriate training so that their qualifications correspond to the skills needed. This is all the more pressing since the industry has an aging workforce. To meet this challenge in one particular Member State, Italy, the social partners in ENEL, the electric supply company with 37,000 employees in Italy and throughout the EU, signed a trail-blazing agreement in 2014 to develop apprenticeships within the company.

Discussions at the national level on the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks have thrown up a number of difficulties regarding the levels at which apprenticeships are classified.

Hairdressing Sector

It is estimated that there are between 400,000-500,000 hairdressing salons in the European Union, the vast majority of which are SMEs and above all micro-enterprises. Around 1 million individuals are working in the sector – mostly young women, and many are self-employed.

The hairdressing sector faces challenges in matching training and skills with the demand of the sector, guaranteeing quality and a safe working environment, whilst catering for real employment and providing personal and career opportunities. The sectoral social partners at the European level, UniEuropa and Coiffure EU, have been focusing on quality of service and establishing quality standards in the sector. In 2009, they signed the "European Agreement on the Implementation of the European Hairdressing Certificates", and in 2013 they launched the European Hairdressing Certificate whose purpose is to maintain high standards in European hairdressing training, create a common understanding of the terminology, improve transparency in training practices, improve mobility of hairdressers and provide for cross-border recognition of acquired certifications and qualifications. The Certificate is based on 3 levels. Level A corresponds to the national training and qualifications system, level B is a qualification for hair stylists and level C is for hair salon managers.

With the support of a Leonardo da Vinci project they developed a series of common training modules for levels B and C, which include assessment rules and assessment criteria.

There has been a slow take up of the certificate however, and it is used primarily in Denmark and to a lesser extent in Austria.

It is suggested that level B would correspond to EQF Level 4 and level C to EQF Level 6, but there have been difficulties in gaining recognition for the certificate at the national level. The European social partners are working to implement the Certificate and to deal with the difficulties encountered (low take-up, official recognition at national levels). The issues identified in the implementation of the EHC underline an unresolved issue – how to align sectoral qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework.

APPENDIX 4

METHODOLOGY

The first project Steering Committee meeting took place on 30 October 2014 in the offices of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). At that meeting it was decided that the most appropriate national case studies for analysis would be provided by Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom, a comprehensive cross-section of Member States with undeveloped, developing, reforming and well-developed apprenticeship systems, from North, South, East and West. It was also decided that the most appropriate European sectoral case studies to consider would be education, construction, electricity supply and hairdressing.

Given the complexity and variety of the different apprenticeship systems, it was decided that the best approach would be to gather a set of qualitative data on the basis of interviews with leading stakeholders. At the national level members of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group would be responsible for setting up interviews with representatives of national trade union confederations and/or sectoral trade unions, where appropriate; representatives of employers' organisations and/or sectoral organisations; public authorities, either the Ministry of Education or Labour, agencies responsible for different aspects of vocational education and training; and training providers, depending upon national circumstances. At the European sectoral level members of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group would invite stakeholders to specially convened seminars held in Brussels.

On the basis of a draft proposal for a set of open questions proposed by the Unionlearn researcher the project Steering Committee finalised a list of issues that would make up the basis for the interviews and seminars.

In preparation for these visits it was also decided that the members of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group would gather material regarding apprenticeships at the national and European sectoral levels and forward this to the Unionlearn researcher, to supplement his own desk research, so that he would be better prepared for the national visits and European sectoral seminars.

The national visits and seminars were carried out from mid-February 2015 to mid-January 2016, as follows: United Kingdom (18-20 February 2015), Italy (4-6 March), France (11-13 March), Ireland (8-10 April), Germany (14-16 April), Bulgaria (20-22 April), Romania (22-24 April), Poland (4-6 May), Latvia (6-8 May), Luxembourg (18-20 May), Greece (1-3 June), Cyprus (3-5 June), Belgium (9-11 June), the Netherlands (25-26 June), Estonia (24-25 August), Denmark (26-28 August), Czech Republic (30 August-1 September), Slovenia (2-4 September), Spain (27-29 October) and Lithuania (18-19 January 2016).

The European sectoral seminars took place, as follows: Education (13 January), Electricity supply (26 March), Construction (26 February), Hairdressing (18 June).

All in all 206 apprenticeship stakeholders were consulted, generally on a one-to-one basis, or less frequently one-to-two. There were four exceptions, in Belgium, France, Ireland and Italy, where the researcher was invited to a meeting with a larger group of people. As can be seen from the accompanying table, the largest single group of stakeholders came from trade unions, followed by public authorities, generally Ministries or training agencies, employers’ organisations and then training providers. ‘Other’ covered apprentices, experts and researchers.

Member State	Trade unions	Employers’ Organisations	Public authorities	Training provider	Other
Belgium	4	5	8	5	
Bulgaria	2		3		
Cyprus	1	1	4	1	
Czech Republic	3	2	2	2	
Denmark	2	3	2	1	1
Estonia	1	1	3		1
France	8	3	10	4	2
Germany	3	2	2		
Greece	2	3	1		1
Ireland	8	2	4	1	
Italy	8	4	3		
Latvia	2	3	1		
Lithuania	2	1	3		1
Luxembourg	3	2	5	2	
Netherlands	5	1	3		
Poland	4	1	3		1
Romania	1	4	3	1	
Slovenia	2	2	3	1	
Spain	6	1	2		
United Kingdom	3	2		2	1
Total	70	43	65	20	8

After each national visit and European sectoral seminar the Unionlearn researcher wrote a draft summary – a distillation of desk research and information from the interviews - and sent it to the appropriate member of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group for comments. Comments, often extensive, were received from all countries.

The ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group met on 27 May and 8 December 2015, and the Unionlearn researcher presented his findings.

A draft version was sent for comments to the ETUC, the twenty national coordinators and the four European sectoral coordinators on 1 February 2016. These comments were integrated into the final version which was delivered on 24 February 2016.

All in all it has been a real team effort, again.

APPENDIX 5

PERSONS CONSULTED

Belgium

- Ellen Albrechts, Strategic Accounts Manager - Education and Youth, Flemish Public Employment Service, *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*
- Iwein Beirens, Legal Adviser, ACV Construction – Industry and Energy, *ACV Bouw – industrie & energie*
- Guéric Bosmans, Adviser, General Federation of Belgian Labour, *Centrale Générale - Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*
- Alain Bultot, Coordinator, French-speaking European Agency, *Agence Européenne Francophone*
- Donat Carlier, Member of *Cabinet*, Ministry of Employment, Brussels *Ministère de l'Emploi Bruxelles*
- Xavier Dehan, Coordinator, Knowledge Centre, *Coordinateur du Centre de Connaissances*
- Christiane de Mayer, Lawyer, Training Service for Small and Medium-sized Entreprises, *Service de la formation des petites et moyennes entreprises*
- Jean-Luc Dumont, President, Union of Employers in Hairdressing, *Union des Coiffeurs de Belgique*
- Jean-Paul Duwart, Principal Trainer, Training Centre Limal, Walloon Institute for Apprenticeship Training in SMEs, *Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises*
- Annie Fourmeaux, Workshop Leader, Centre for Apprenticeship Training, *Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance Court-St-Etienne*
- Olivier Francq, Project Officer, *Forem-Formation*
- Charles Istasse, General Secretary, Employers' Union for the Middle Classes, *Union des Classes Moyennes*
- Robert Loop, Director, *Forem-Formation*
- Christophe Mattart, Training Coordinator, Training Service for SMEs, *Service de la formation des petites et moyennes entreprises, Brussels*
- Isabelle Michel, Adviser Education and Training, FGTB Wallonne, *Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique*
- Geert Ramaekers, Flanders Director, *fvb-ffc constructive*
- Fabienne Tinant, Coordinator, Centre for Apprenticeship Training, *Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance Court-St-Etienne*
- Laetitia Van Cauwenbergh, expert, Walloon Institute for Apprenticeship Training in SMEs, *Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises*

- Peter van der Hallen, Adviser, Labour Market-Education-Training, Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*
- Ingrid Vanhoren, Coordinator, Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training, *Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming*
- Marie-Hélène Vercléven, Member of *Cabinet*, Ministry of Education, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
- Marion Vrijens, Deputy Chef de *Cabinet*, Flemish Minister of Education, *Vlaamse Minister van Onderwijs*

Bulgaria

- Maria Andreeva, Deputy Director, Programmes and Projects, Employment Agency, *Агенция по заетостта*
- Stefka Limanska, Head of VET, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Ministry на труда и социалната политика*
- Ivaylo Naydenov, State expert, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Ministry на труда и социалната политика*
- Diana Naydenova, Chief Expert, Labour market Department, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, *Конфедерация на независимите синдикати в България - КНСБ*
- Yuliya Simeonova, Executive Secretary, Education, Training & Projects Department, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria, *Конфедерация на независимите синдикати в България - КНСБ*

Cyprus

- Michalis Antoniou, Assistant Director General, Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, *Ομοσπονδία Εργοδοτών & Βιομηχάνων*
- Andreas Eleftheriou, General Inspector, Secondary Technical and Vocational Training, Ministry of Education and Culture, *Μέση Τεχνική και Επαγγελματική Εκπαίδευση, Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού*
- Panicos Lassetas, Senior Human Resource Officer, Cyprus Human Resource Development Authority, *Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού Κύπρου*
- Elias Margadjis, Director of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, *Μέση Τεχνική και Επαγγελματική Εκπαίδευση, Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού*
- Maria Mikellides, Senior Productivity Officer, Cyprus Productivity Centre, *Κέντρο Παραγωγικότητας Κύπρου*
- Nikos Nikolaou, Director, SEK Trade Union School, Cyprus Workers' Confederation, *Συνομοσπονδία Εργαζομένων Κύπρου*
- George Themistocleous, Director, Themistocleon Vocational Training Institute, *Θεμιστόκλειον Ινστιτούτο Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης*

Czech Republic

- Jan Brůha, Senior Expert, National Institute for Education, *Národní ústav pro vzdělávání*
- Gerhard Knop, Executive Sales Director, Witte Automotive Nejdek
- Dušan Martínek, Head of the Department for Development of Human Resources and Project Activities, Czech and Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, *Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů*
- Irena Palánová, Head of the Department for Social Partnership and International Cooperation, National Institute for Education, *Národní ústav pro vzdělávání*
- Petr Pečenka, expert, Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education, *Českomoravský odborový svaz pracovníků školství*
- Zdeněk Pracný, Officer of Department of Secondary Education and Tertiary Professional Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*

- Miloš Rathouský, Policy Officer, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, *Svaz průmyslu a dopravy ČR*
- Milan Scheer, Chairman Trade Union Kovo, Witte Automotive Nejdek
- Marta Stará, Head of Department of Secondary Education and Tertiary Professional Education, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, *Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*

Denmark

- Rasmus Frimodt, Head of Section, National Centre for Vocational Education, *Nationale Center for Erhvervspædagogik*
- Katarina Kruse, Consultant, Metropolitan University College
- Jan Reitz Jørgensen, Senior Consultant, Ministry of Children and Education, *Ministeriet for Børn, Undervisning og Ligestilling*
- Simon Neergaard-Holm, Senior Adviser, Danish Employers' Association, *Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*
- Torsten Lindum Poulsen, Deputy Director, Construction Trade Committee, *Byggeriets Uddannelser*
- Trine Rasmussen, Trade Union Adviser, Educational and IT Department, Danish Metalworkers' Union, *Dansk Metal*
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APPENDIX 6

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