

European Vocational Skills Week

Training at Work Award

THEME OF THE AWARD

Professional training in micro, small and medium enterprises at various career stages

Micro-, small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), are the backbone of Europe's economy. SMEs represent 99% of all businesses in the European Union and employ more than 67% of the people in work. In 2016, furthermore, they have created around 85% of new jobs.¹ These companies are a key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation, and social integration in the European Union.

SMEs AS THE BACKBONE OF EUROPEAN ECONOMY



SMEs EMPLOY 2 OUT OF EVERY 3 EMPLOYEES AND PRODUCE 57 CENTS OF EVERY EURO OF VALUE ADDED¹



Their strength lies, among other things, in their capacity to promptly adapt to change; to do that they need a skilled and adaptable workforce. Unfortunately, only a limited number of micro, small and medium size companies invest in the development of their workforce. Only 25% of people employed in small enterprises take part in any kind of work-related education or training, compared to 46% in large companies.²

Nevertheless, there are good practices across Europe regarding professional training in SMEs; examples which show how employers and workers understand the need for continuing training throughout the different career stages, including

good examples for shared funding models for investment in workers' development. **Through this award we would like to identify practices that could act as inspiration for others to follow.**

MAIN AIMS OF THE AWARD

- To give visibility to excellent practices from all over the European Union that foster professional training in micro, small and medium enterprises at various career stages.
- To draw public attention to the topic of learning throughout professional lives and new practices and policies in this area.
- To complement the various [Vocational Education and Training awards](#) linked to the [Vocational Skills Week](#) by focusing on the learning that takes place beyond initial education to support further skills acquisition for successfully managing career transitions and progression.

WHY TO PARTICIPATE?

The winners gain:

- Recognition and honour;
- A Training at Work Award (a piece of art or handicraft, award certificate);
- An invitation to a person of the winning organisation to the Closing ceremony of the Second European Vocational Skills Week in Brussels, Belgium (24 November 2017) including travel and accommodation;
- International visibility in European Commission social media channels and European Vocational Skills Week website;
- Presentation of the initiative on relevant European platforms (e.g. [EPALE](#)).

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/>

² Continuing vocational training in enterprises, Eurostat 2010

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Micro, small or medium companies³, which provide up-skilling and/or re-skilling opportunities for their employees.
- Intermediaries such as:
 - training providers,
 - Human Resource organisations,
 - employers' organisations,
 - trade unions,
 - trade or commerce organisations (e.g. chambers of trade or commerce),
 - sector organisations

that support SMEs in implementing skills development strategies and measures in duo together with a micro, small or medium company they support.

Applicant must be active in at least one of EU Member States or EU candidate countries or EFTA countries.

CATEGORIES OF THE AWARD

European social partners ([Business Europe](#), [ETUC](#), [UEAPME](#)) and [Eurochambres](#) will seek to reward three outstanding initiatives, one for each type of category:

- Micro company.
- Small company.
- Medium company.

CRITERIA

Eligibility criteria:

1. The initiative must relate to re-skill or up-skill employees of micro, small or medium companies.
2. The initiative should ideally be ongoing or at least not be older than 2 years.

3. The initiative must not have already been rewarded by another European Prize.
4. The initiative must be implemented in at least one of EU Member States or EU candidate countries or EFTA countries.

Selection criteria:

1. Internal coherence of the initiative.
2. Achievements of the initiative.
3. Added value of the initiative for the workers and company.
4. Potential to be replicated elsewhere.
5. Sustainability of the initiative.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

Please send your submission by using this [form](#).

Deadline: **Friday 27th of September 2017 (23:00 CET)**

CONTACT

Should you have any questions please contact through this functional mailbox EMPL-E3-TRAINING-AT-WORK@ec.europa.eu.

³ **micro company**: company employing from 2 to 9 employees;
small company: company employing from 10 to 49 employees;
medium company: company employing from 50 to 250 employees