



High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles



There is strong evidence that work-based learning helps to equip young people with the skills that can improve their employability and ease the transition from school to work. This is why the European Commission has called upon governments, social partners and education and training providers to promote apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning. And this is why we are working to inspire and support stakeholders to make it happen.

The European Pact for Youth, launched in November 2015, is a concrete example of how stakeholders are responding to this call: a business-led initiative to create 10,000 business-education partnerships that over the next two years will lead to at least 100,000 good quality apprenticeships, traineeships or entry-level jobs and boost the chances of young people getting jobs.

Supporting quality opportunities for young people, including apprenticeships is core to the Youth Guarantee, supported by the Youth Employment Initiative, with targeted funding in EU regions worst affected by youth unemployment and the European Social Fund which operates in all regions.

But who are the stakeholders that should be involved in designing and delivering apprenticeships? How can companies, in particular SMEs, get involved and offer apprenticeship places? How can we increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships so that many more young people are inspired to follow this route, and what role can career guidance play? And, of course, how do we make sure that apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes give a genuine, high quality learning experience that gives young people a solid foundation and an entry-ticket to rewarding careers? The 20 guiding principles identified in this report provide answers to these questions and present possible solutions drawn from experience across Europe.

In this report you can also read how different countries have successfully introduced some of the principles. These examples of good practices will be especially valuable for governments, business, social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders looking for inspiration on how to develop work-based learning and apprenticeships systems.

I encourage you to make use of the 20 guidelines to strengthen apprenticeship systems across Europe in order to create better future for young generations.



Marianne Thyssen

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



Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1 NATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL PARTNERS' INVOLVEMENT	6
Principle 1: A clear and consistent legal framework enabling apprenticeship partners to act effectively and guaranteeing mutual rights and responsibilities	7
Principle 2: A structured, continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners including a transparent way of coordination and decision-making	9
Principle 3: Strengthening the role of social partners by capacity building, assuming ownership and taking on responsibility for implementation.....	13
Principle 4: Systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies	16
Principle 5: Sharing costs and benefits to the mutual advantage of companies, VET providers and learners.....	18
2 SUPPORT FOR COMPANIES, IN PARTICULAR SMES, OFFERING APPRENTICESHIPS	23
Principle 6: Supporting measures that make apprenticeships more attractive and accessible to SMEs.....	23
Principle 7: Finding the right balance between the specific skill needs of training companies and the general need to improve the employability of apprentices	26
Principle 8: Focusing on companies having no experience with apprenticeships.....	28
Principle 9: Supporting companies providing apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners.....	30
Principle 10: Motivating and supporting companies to assign qualified trainers and tutors.....	32
3 ATTRACTIVENESS OF APPRENTICESHIPS AND IMPROVED CAREER GUIDANCE	36
Principle 11: Promoting the permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways	37
Principle 12: Improving the image of VET and apprenticeships by promoting excellence.....	41
Principle 13: Career guidance to empower young people to make well-founded choices	44
Principle 14: Enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeships by raising the quality of VET teachers.....	50
Principle 15: Promoting the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships through a broad range of awareness-raising activities.....	52
4 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN WORK-BASED LEARNING	56
Principle 16: Providing a clear framework for quality assurance of apprenticeship at system, provider and company level ensuring systematic feedback.....	57
Principle 17: Ensuring the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in companies and the society	59
Principle 18: Fostering mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation between the apprenticeship partners	62
Principle 19: Ensuring fair, valid, and authentic assessment of learning outcomes.....	64
Principle 20: Supporting the continuous professional development of in-company trainers and improving their working conditions.....	68
ABBREVIATIONS	72
GLOSSARY	73
REFERENCES	74
MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	79



Executive summary

This document presents 20 guiding principles developed by the ET 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education and Training (WG on VET) in 2014-2015. These principles were developed during a series of meetings, in-depth country focus workshops and webinars. Representatives of the EU Member States, EFTA countries, and Candidate Countries as well as EU Social Partner and VET Provider organisations, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) participated in the Working Group, which was chaired by the Commission. Cedefop and external consultants have contributed to the working group through background documents and research activities.

The key purpose of the WG on VET is to respond to the objectives of ET 2020, Rethinking Education, and the Bruges Communiqué as well as the Riga conclusions of June 2015; notably the call to governments, social partners and VET providers to promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, and to make related policies more effective and more targeted to the labour market needs. The rationale is that promoting work-based learning, including apprenticeships, can help young people make a smoother transition from school to work, improve their employability and hence, contribute to reducing youth unemployment.

The guidance principles respond to four policy challenges that are important to address in the promotion of apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning:

- national governance and social partners' involvement;
- support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships;
- attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance; and
- quality assurance in work-based learning.

Work based learning (WBL), a key aspect of VET, is directly linked to its goal of helping learners acquire knowledge, skills and competences with direct relevance for the labour market. WBL can have different forms (e.g. school-based VET with on-the-job training or work-based learning in school including simulation), but this document focuses primarily on apprenticeships. Apprenticeships formally combine and alternate company-based training with school-based education, and lead to nationally recognised qualification upon successful completion. Most often, there is a contractual relationship between the employer and the apprentice, with the apprentice being paid for his/her work.

The 20 guiding principles complement each other by addressing various challenges at the national system level as well as the VET provider and company levels. For each principle, examples from the Member States are presented for inspiration as they show how certain elements of apprenticeships and work-based learning can be put into place. The examples in this publication are not an exhaustive list of all possible measures, and similar measures and organisational structures can also exist also in other countries not presented here.

Herein we present the key messages replying to the four key challenges (principles in *italics*).



National governance and social partners' involvement

Governments should *provide a clear and consistent legal framework enabling apprenticeship partners to act effectively with mutual rights and responsibilities* (1). The “apprenticeship partners” are the apprentice, the training company and the VET school or training centre. The legal framework should recognise the status of the apprentice as a learner and ensure his/her right to high-quality training that develops strong, transferable skills.

More than any other form of education and training, apprenticeships are often subject to different legislation (education, labour, etc.). Therefore, consistency should be given particular attention in national governance. To be effective, legislation should safeguard the rights and responsibilities of the main partners (VET providers, employers, apprentices and social partners), while duly involving employer and employee representatives in questions of apprenticeship content, assessment and certification. Thus, governments should not attempt to micromanage apprenticeships, but rather establish an adequate legal framework.

National governance should facilitate a *structured continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners including a transparent method of coordination and decision-making* (2).

Attention should also be given to *strengthening the role of the social partners by capacity building, assuming ownership and taking on responsibility for implementation* (3). The commitment of the social partners is an important component of a successful apprenticeship system. The social partners can for instance ensure that apprenticeship programmes are high performing and that they are regularly reviewed to meet the needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, good-quality apprenticeships require promotion of *systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies* (4). In particular, SMEs with limited administrative resources may benefit from such continuous cooperation and support provided through business-education partnerships at the local level.

Apprenticeships should benefit the learners as well as the training companies. Many training companies benefit from offering apprenticeships, because they can provide a supply of people trained to meet the company's specific needs. Furthermore, apprenticeship training can increase interest in training among other employees; this creates a ‘training culture’ in the training company as well as in the sector. Therefore, it is important that governance *ensures a balanced sharing of resources and benefits to the mutual advantage of companies, providers and learners* (5).

Support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships

A clear and consistent legal framework is an important precondition but may not be sufficient to motivate companies to take on apprentices. Many companies, in particular SMEs, still regard it as a burden to take on apprentices because of the administrative costs involved in appointing trainers for apprentices, cooperating with VET schools, and so on. Therefore, *support measures that make apprenticeships more attractive and accessible to SMEs* (6) may be needed to motivate companies to take on apprentices.



In order to ensure the employability of young people the content and provision of apprenticeships should be updated continuously to labour market needs while still respecting the skill needs of the individual training company. This requires *finding the right balance between the specific skill needs of training companies and the employability of apprentices* (7).

It is important to *focus on companies with no prior experience with apprentices* (8) that may need both financial and non-financial support measures.

VET including apprenticeships can also play an important role regarding the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people who are often not in employment, education or training. However, this may imply extra costs for the companies providing such apprenticeships placements. Consequently, it may be important to *support companies that provide apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners* (9).

In addition, it may be important to *motivate and support companies to assign qualified trainers and tutors to their apprentices* (10).

Attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance

Promoting apprenticeships not only depends on motivating companies, but also on young, potential learners and their parents finding VET including apprenticeships attractive compared to other educational paths. It is important that VET is not perceived as a 'dead-end' that makes it difficult to move to other educational or career paths. Therefore, it is important to *promote permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways* (11). For instance, permeability can be enhanced by giving VET graduates formal access to higher education, creating bridging programmes, and/or integrating transversal skills at all levels of VET.

VET including apprenticeships currently do not have the same standing as general education or academic education and are often regarded as second-rate education and training in many countries. This calls for *improving the image of VET and apprenticeships by promoting excellence* (12). Promoting excellence means that all stakeholders involved in the provision of VET including apprenticeships (learners, schools, teachers, training companies and the social partners) should attempt to enhance the professional pride of their vocational trade by doing their best to develop high-quality skills and making them visible to the public.

Career guidance that empowers young people to make well-founded choices (13) is an important element in relation to helping young people in the transition from school to work. Career guidance is a continuous process, which can start at an early stage in primary school and may continue as young people mature and make their choices on educational paths and careers. To ensure that guidance is accessible to young people, a good solution could be to adopt a multi-channel approach that combines personal face-to-face guidance with other modes of delivery such as the internet, hotlines, etc.

Whether young people find learning attractive and complete their education also depends on their relationship with VET teachers and trainers and on their competences. In order to *enhance the attractiveness of apprenticeships by raising the quality of VET teachers* (14), it may therefore be important to continually update the vocational and pedagogical skills of VET teachers and trainers. In addition, cooperation between schools and



enterprises is important to ensure good-quality apprenticeships and improve teachers' knowledge of current work practices and trainers – of pedagogics and didactics.

Improving the attractiveness of VET including apprenticeships also requires influencing the mindset of young people and their parents who may have outdated ideas about VET. Influencing such ideas requires *promoting the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships through a broad range of awareness-raising activities* (15). Awareness-raising activities such as work 'tasters' and job shadowing can help young people to make well-founded choices on education and career. At the same time, awareness-raising activities can combat prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about VET and apprenticeships. To be effective, awareness-raising activities should be launched at both the national and sector levels and involve the social partners.

Quality assurance in work-based learning

Quality assurance in VET has been in focus in European cooperation for more than a decade. Recently, the quality of work-based learning has also been brought into focus. Work-based learning requires a *clear framework for quality assurance of apprenticeship at the system, provider and company levels ensuring systematic feedback* (16). Conditions for quality assurance of apprenticeships should be agreed upon at all levels (policy makers, industry, VET providers) and clear roles and responsibilities for the various partners as well as mechanisms for cooperation should be defined. However, the existence of legal and formal arrangements alone cannot guarantee quality in work-based learning.

A key issue is that systems and institutions should be able to accommodate change. Governance should institute mechanisms *ensuring that the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in companies and the society* (17). This may call for a systematic, evidence-based VET policy approach with regular forecasts of skill needs and evaluations of VET reforms and pilot projects.

Quality also requires *fostering mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation between apprenticeship partners at all levels* (18). At the local level, for example, cooperation can involve final examinations of apprentices jointly conducted by in-company trainers, teachers and representatives from the professional community to ensure coherence between school and company training. At the national level, it may involve dialogue between the involved public authorities.

Ensuring a fair, valid and authentic assessment of learning outcomes (19) is an important element of quality assurance of work-based learning. As learning may take place in different learning environments, learning outcomes should serve as a common reference point for assessment. Furthermore, assessment should take place in a business or business-like context to be as realistic as possible. The qualifications and training of assessors is also an important aspect when ensuring the quality of assessment.

In order to ensure the quality of in-company training it is important to *support the continuous professional development of in-company trainers and improve their work conditions* (20). National recognition of trainer qualifications should be encouraged. However, a high degree of regulation of in-company trainers should be avoided as this may discourage skilled workers from becoming in-company trainers.



National governance and social partners' involvement

- **Principle 1:** A clear and consistent legal framework enabling apprenticeship partners to act effectively and guaranteeing mutual rights and responsibilities
- **Principle 2:** A structured, continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners including a transparent method of coordination and decision-making
- **Principle 3:** Strengthening the role of social partners by capacity building, assuming ownership and taking on responsibility for implementation
- **Principle 4:** Systematic cooperation between VET school or training centres and companies
- **Principle 5:** Sharing costs and benefits to the mutual advantage of companies, VET providers and learners

Support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships

- **Principle 6:** Supporting measures that make apprenticeships more attractive and accessible to SMEs
- **Principle 7:** Finding the right balance between the specific skill need of training companies and the general need to improve the employability of apprentices
- **Principle 8:** Focusing on companies having no experience with apprentices
- **Principle 9:** Supporting companies providing apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners
- **Principle 10:** Motivating and supporting companies to assign qualified trainers and tutors

Attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance

- **Principle 11:** Promoting the permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways
- **Principle 12:** Improving the image of VET and apprenticeships by promoting excellence
- **Principle 13:** Career guidance to empower young people to make well-founded choices
- **Principle 14:** Enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeships by raising the quality of VET teachers
- **Principle 15:** Promoting the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships through a broad range of awareness-raising activities

Quality assurance in work-based learning

- **Principle 16:** Providing a clear framework for quality assurance of apprenticeship at the system, provider and company levels ensuring systematic feedback
- **Principle 17:** Ensuring the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in companies and society
- **Principle 18:** Fostering mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation between the apprenticeship partners
- **Principle 19:** Ensuring fair, valid, and authentic assessment of learning outcomes
- **Principle 20:** Supporting the continuous professional development of in-company trainers and improving their working conditions

NATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL PARTNERS' INVOLVEMENT

"The legal framework should recognise the status of the apprentice as a learner and ensure his/her right to high-quality training..."

"...inclusive and participatory approach to apprenticeship requires coordinating the interests of a broad range of stakeholders."

"...for an apprenticeship system to flourish social partners' engagement needs to go beyond the advisory role"

"...systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies can enhance a smooth transition from school to work."

"...financing of apprenticeships should be shared in a way that provides motivation for companies, VET schools or training centres as well as learners to engage in apprenticeships."





1 National governance and social partners' involvement

Principle 1: A clear and consistent legal framework enabling apprenticeship partners to act effectively and guaranteeing mutual rights and responsibilities

In Western societies, the law governs formal apprenticeship. A clear and consistent legal framework is necessary for high-quality apprenticeships. Legislation should recognise the unique status of the apprentice as learner and secure his/her right to high-quality training with strong transferable elements. Effective legislation safeguards the rights and responsibilities of the main partners while leaving questions of apprenticeship content, assessment and certification to be agreed upon by employer and employee representatives (Steedman, 2012). Thus, governments should not seek to micro-manage apprenticeship, but to focus on its role as facilitator and regulator, ensuring that the social partners act for the common good.

A consistent legal framework for VET and apprenticeship

In developing or reforming laws, clarity and consistency should be given particular attention as apprenticeship, more than any other form of education, is often subject to different laws (education, youth, labour, etc.) and regulations (e.g. collective agreements) and is often governed on several levels (e.g. national, regional). There are various ways to implement a consistent legal framework for VET; some countries may focus their reforms on avoiding or reducing existing inconsistencies, while others may prioritise streamlining the administration. For example, a recurrent topic for clarification is the status of apprentices as students or employees; linked to that are questions of vacation entitlement, regulation of working hours, work safety, parental leave, health insurance and the like. This is often not just a technical issue to be solved, but also a political concern as different stakeholders (e.g. labour or education ministries) may have different perspectives on apprenticeships. Administrative reforms, ongoing in many countries, could also be an opportunity to modernise legislation of apprenticeship systems. Furthermore, it is important to note that apprenticeship systems are usually part of a broader VET system. Some countries have concentrated their reform efforts on repositioning work-based learning including apprenticeship within this broader context and enacted a single VET act. Apart from the governance structure, a consistent legal framework for VET finally also has to reach the individual level; apprentices should have a meaningful contract that includes a clear task description and working conditions for the apprentice.

Effective multi-level legislation

In the event that different levels (e.g. national and regional levels) are involved, an arrangement is needed by which the national government is responsible for the overall guidelines for VET while the details of its implementation are regulated by institutions at the regional level. This allows for a degree of local autonomy and is particularly important for countries with large regional disparities in terms of their capacity to develop apprenticeships.



Balancing collective obligations and local autonomy

Even in countries without federal structures and regional legislation, strategic and operational functions need to be distinguished and adequately allocated. Ideally, the national level is in control of the strategic functions and pursues long-term objectives, while the regional and local levels fulfil operational functions. A regularly updated national plan for apprenticeship agreed upon by all apprenticeship partners and including a common vision and goals can be an appropriate instrument at the national level to fulfil this strategic function.

*This example from **Switzerland** shows how a transparent and coherent legal framework for the whole VET system can be organised:*

Efforts to improve the apprenticeship system in Switzerland as a response to the economic and structural crises of the 1990s culminated in a fundamental reform and a single legal framework for the VET system put into force in 2004 (VPETA - Federal Vocational & Professional Education & Training Act). Since then, the legislative power for the entire VET system (except tertiary level) is at the federal level. This is also remarkable as it is the only education sector in Switzerland for which legislative power is at the federal level. A stock-taking from different angles after ten years showed predominately positive results in terms of attractiveness, apprenticeship places and funding. For example, the number of apprenticeship places offered increased constantly since 2005 (by 25% from 2005 to 2013). In 2013, the number of apprenticeship places has exceeded the number of applicants. The integration of the public sector (e.g. health and social services), formerly part of the competences of Cantons, has improved the attractiveness and relevance of the system and presented new opportunities for young women (Polito, 2014). For further information:

"Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training"
<https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20001860/index.html>

*This example from **Poland** shows how to cooperate to improve the legal framework for high quality work-based learning at employers:*

In January 2015, the Minister of Education established an Advisory Council for VET. The members of this advisory body are representatives of ministries responsible for particular occupations taught at VET schools, representatives of employers' associations and the biggest education trade unions. The task of the Council is to give opinions and propose actions on improving employers' involvement in VET. The first outcome of the Council's work was its contribution to the amendment of regulation on practical training in an occupational field. The Minister of National Education and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy signed the amended regulation on practical training in an occupational field in August 2015. The main aim was to extend the scope of practical training, provided by employers, to students who learn at technical schools and improve its quality. The main changes include: determining the types of contracts for work-based learning which can be signed with employers; defining the share of practical training for each type of VET schools in relation to the whole VET programme; providing employers with a possibility to influence the training programme to be carried by them; and providing information on organisational issues related to the arrangement of workplace learning. For further information: <https://men.gov.pl/ministerstwo/informacje/dualne-ksztalcenie-zawodowe-rozporzadzenie-podpisane.html>



Principle 2: A structured, continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners including a transparent way of coordination and decision-making

"International experience shows that, once legal safeguards are in place, employer engagement and constructive dialogue with employee representatives are the most fundamental conditions for a successful apprenticeship system. Apprenticeship is strongest in countries where both employer and employee representative organisations wholeheartedly support and promote apprenticeship and the conditions necessary for its success" (Steedman, 2012, p. 11). (On the role of social partners see also principle 3). Although this insight is unquestionably true, an inclusive and participatory approach to apprenticeship requires coordinating the interests of a broad range of stakeholders. Beyond the usual actors such as training enterprises, VET providers, ministries, government agencies, employer associations, trade unions and chambers of industry and commerce, this could also include parents' and apprentices' representatives as well as research organisations. In order to coordinate the activities of these interest groups ('apprenticeship partners'), appropriate institutional arrangements and procedures for communication and decision-making need to be in place.

Intermediary bodies

While the facilitation of such a dialogue is fundamentally the duty of the government, it could assign this task to intermediary bodies such as a national institute, a government agency for VET or a VET council. Chambers of skilled crafts, industry or commerce, professional organisations or sector skill councils also frequently act as intermediary bodies. Given the multi-level structures in most countries, national boards need to be supported by regional boards or sectoral committees, depending on country-specific requirements, who oversee the implementation of new occupational profiles and curricula, make arrangements for the coordinated instruction and training of the apprentices, and take part in the organisation of examinations.

In particular, the institutions closely linked to the businesses, such as social partner organisations, sectorial or branch organisations, chambers of skilled crafts, industry or commerce and professional bodies play a key role at system level in the governance and success of well-functioning apprenticeship systems. The involvement of branch organisations ensures that experts with updated knowledge of the occupations in the companies qualify the provision of skills. Professional business organisations and chambers can also usefully support SMEs in shaping curriculum design or seeking flexible arrangements between VET schools and companies to meet specific demands (UEAPME, 2013).

Bipartite or tripartite bodies at national, regional and sector level

There are ample examples (see below) of how countries can organise these intermediary bodies. A common means are tripartite bodies (consisting of equal numbers of employer, employee and government representatives). However, there are also examples of bipartite bodies in which government representatives only have observer status. Different intermediary bodies usually complement each other, e.g. a national tripartite board may be responsible for defining occupational profiles, while regional chambers of commerce



organise examinations for apprentices. Intermediary bodies can work at national, regional and sectorial levels. Regardless at which level they operate, it is important that these bodies are inclusive of apprenticeship partners and that students/apprentices are represented by either employees' or students' organisations.

Regular open conferences to improve apprenticeship systems including citizen participation

Besides the official representation of the apprenticeship partners in intermediate bodies, there are also other means to arrive at more inclusive and participatory systems. A regular forum (e.g. an annual apprenticeship conference) could be an option to give all apprenticeship partners a say.

Formal feedback-mechanisms between VET systems and labour market organisations in order to adapt training provision

Many Member States have established formal feedback mechanisms between the vocational education and training system (VET providers, school boards and education ministries) and the labour market organisations (companies, chambers of commerce, employers' and workers' organisations, etc.) to set up new or update existing qualifications, VET programmes or curricula. The formal feedback mechanisms are typically embedded in the committees and councils representing the social partners and other stakeholders of VET and apprenticeship. Such committees and councils typically cover specific sectors where they monitor the development of new skill needs in the labour market in order to update VET programmes and training provisions.

Systemic representation of apprentices

There are many ways of representing apprentices and each country should seek to develop their own representation methodology for apprentices. Besides official places in the various bodies (e.g. school councils or apprenticeship councils at a regional and national level) and youth and apprenticeship representatives at company level, complementary ways of representation could be considered. For example, transparency and inclusiveness could be strengthened by appointing an ombudsman or citizen advocate for apprentices. This advocate, appointed by the state, local or municipal government, would have a significant degree of independence and be charged with representing the interests of apprentices by addressing complaints of maladministration or rights violations.

*This example from **the Netherlands** shows how a structured and continuous dialogue between stakeholders of VET and apprenticeships can be organised in order to ensure that VET is updated to labour market needs:*

Since 1st August 2015, the Foundation for cooperation between VET and the Labour Market (Stichting samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs – Bedrijfsleven SBB) is responsible for developing and monitoring qualification standards. Six sectoral chambers under SBB comprise representatives of different stakeholders; social partners, the government and VET providers. SBB has two mandatory tasks. The first is to maintain the link between VET needs of the labour market and to establish qualifications (or 'occupation competences profiles') relevant for the sector. Social partners are responsible for compiling an occupational profile and ensuring that it is up to date. The second is to



accredit work placement companies and to guarantee the quality of training. SBB is well embedded in the local labour market (for example using research outcomes on demands by institute ROA in Maastricht). It plays a crucial role in feedback between VET and the labour market and aims to bridge the gap between sectoral needs and education provision. (Source: Cedefop 2013, updated by ET2020 VET Group representative for the Netherlands)

*This example from **Switzerland** shows how a structured dialogue between the stakeholders of apprenticeships can be organised as a series of regular conferences:*

The annual "National High-Level Conference on Vocational and Professional Education and Training" (*Nationales Spitzentreffen der Berufsbildung*) has been held since 2005. The goal of this conference is to discuss the recent developments in VPET at a high level and to make strategic decisions on how to strengthen and develop the VPET system (vocational and professional education and training). After each National High-Level Conference on VPET, a joint declaration is adopted. The annual "Associated Partner Conference" (*Verbundpartnertagung*) is a two-day workshop-type event. This well-established event for VPET stakeholders serves to share know-how and experiences in relation to the latest challenges, themes and activities in VPET. The VPET partners include the Confederation, the cantons, professional organisations, trade unions, industry associations as well as stakeholders in education, labour market and integration (depending on the theme of the Conference). The "Fall Conference on Vocational and Professional Education and Training" (*Herbsttagung der Berufsbildung*) is the national platform event for the dissemination of information concerning the VPET system. It includes presentations of projects and enables networking amongst VPET stakeholders. (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Switzerland)

*Similarly, this example from **France** shows how a structured dialogue between a broad range of stakeholders of VET and apprenticeships can provide feedback mechanisms:*

The Advisory Committees on Occupations continuously diagnose the need for new skills and revise education programmes accordingly. The primary responsibility for initial vocational education and training curricula lies with the CPCs (Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives, Advisory Committees on Occupations). There are 14 CPCs comprised of employers, employees, public authorities and experts, to ensure that the competences acquired on completion of IVET programmes match the skills needs of the labour market. Each sector's CPC is responsible for assessing the need for a (new) qualification, preparing the qualification including a list of the subjects to be taught under the qualification, outlining the structure and organisation of the examinations to be taken, etc., and sending documentation to the Ministry of Education for approval (Cedefop 2013).

For further information: Les commissions professionnelles consultatives, <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid46815/cpc.html>

*This example from **Sweden** shows how a structured dialogue between the stakeholders of VET and apprenticeships can be organised in national councils that represent industry, social partners, and some national or regional authorities:*

In Sweden, there are twelve national councils, one for each of the 12 national vocational



programmes in the upper secondary school, including vocational education for adults. Each council has 6-10 representatives from the industry, social partners, and some national or regional authorities. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket) prepares and leads the 4-6 yearly meetings of the councils. The councils were established in 2010 and serve as advisory bodies to the National Agency for Education in questions concerning upper secondary vocational education and IVET for adults. The aim is to make sure that vocational education meets the needs of the labour market. The national programme councils give stakeholders an opportunity to take part in the continuous development of IVET. Current issues for the national programme councils are the content of syllabuses and courses, information material for students, in-service training for vocational teachers, attracting students and employers to apprenticeship education, vocational education for adults, and analyses of labour market needs. (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Sweden). For further information: The Swedish National Agency for Education www.skolverket.se

In BE fr, the SFMQ (Frenchspeaking department for occupations and certifications) is an example of a wide platform gathering social partners, PES, educators and trainers:

The aim of that platform is to draft for all VET providers and consortium of validation of skills common occupation profiles and training profiles composed of:

- Learning outcomes and LO units
- Equipment profile
- Assessment profile for each unit. This gives the reference framework necessary to build standardized evaluation tests and context, assessment criteria and indicators

The platform is mainly composed of 3 chambers:

- Occupation chamber gathering social partners (unions of employers and employees) and PES and drafting occupation profiles
- Education and training chamber gathering Education providers (at all levels and forms of vocational education), training providers and drafting training profiles
- Consultation/dialogue and approval chamber gathering representatives of the 2 above chambers and governmental representatives.

For further information: <http://www.sfmq.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1436>

In BE fr, OFFA (Office francophone de la formation en alternance) is an example of a brand new hub gathering all the apprenticeship actors (Brussels, Wallonia, education and training providers) and social partners. It has just been set in October 2015. The main missions of that agency are:

- Pilot the 2 apprenticeship systems existing in BE fr (one led by Education and the other by vocational training sector)
- Provide a single status and a single contract for all apprentices
- Ensure mobility inter-providers and inter-regions, and equal treatment for all apprentices
- Ensure transparency between supply and demand of apprenticeships
- Promote apprenticeship through information campaigns



- Monitor apprenticeship on a quantitative and qualitative basis
- Define a common policy for company incentives

For further information:

<https://wallex.wallonie.be/PdfLoader.php?type=doc&linkpdf=13517-13813-7526>.

(the website is under construction).

*This example from **Latvia** shows how a legal framework for VET and work-based learning can stipulate the involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders in tripartite and multipartite bodies:*

In Latvia work-based learning (WBL) is a relatively recent and highly prioritised VET development. A two-year WBL piloting phase (2013-2015) with the involvement of six VET institutions has been completed. Following this, in 2015 amendments to the VET Act introducing the concept of WBL to the Latvian school-based VET system were adopted for the first time. The Act stipulates that WBL is one of the forms for the implementation of a VET program. Furthermore, the Act also stipulates the legal status of the Sector Expert Councils (SECs) and the VET institutions' Convents. The Sector Expert Councils (SECs) are 12 tripartite SECs covering the main sectors of national economy. The VET institutions' Convents are multi-partite advisory bodies incorporating representatives from VET providers, national and local public authorities, employers and employees' organisations, and sector associations.

(Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Latvia). For further information: 'Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia' <http://en.lddk.lv/projekts/implementing-work-based-learning-in-latvia-lithuania-and-estonia/>

*This example from **Poland** presents establishment of fruitful dialogue to encourage more employers to provide more WBL opportunities for VET students.*

In January 2015, the Ministers of Education, Labour and Social Policy, Economy and the Treasury signed an agreement on supporting Vocational Education and Training. The aim of this agreement is to undertake collaborative actions to strengthen the quality and attractiveness of VET as well as encourage employers to engage in vocational education. As a result, the act on special economic zones was amended and special financial incentives for employers engaging in VET (providing training at their companies) in special economic zones were established.

For further information: <https://men.gov.pl/ministerstwo/informacje/miedzyresortowe-porozumienie-o-wspolpracy-na-rzecz-rozwoju-ksztalcenia-zawodowego.html>

Principle 3: Strengthening the role of social partners by capacity building, assuming ownership and taking on responsibility for implementation

Employers are the key drivers in developing and maintaining apprenticeship systems. They offer apprenticeship places, define the skills needs and engage in developing the system through their representative organisation(s). They invest in apprenticeship for a



variety of reasons, above all because it offers an effective way to recruit workers with the skills the companies need.

Employee organisations and trade unions play an important role in helping to ensure that apprentices' legal rights are safeguarded. Their main interest is the protection of the interests of apprentices. Supporting the quality of training is part of this activity. Being responsible for all workers, they also need to make sure that apprentices do not compete with employed workers and are not exploited as a cheap labour supply.

In many European countries, there is a trend towards stronger involvement of the social partners in VET. The emergence of a participatory model for governing VET in which social partners have an advisory role can be observed. However, for an apprenticeship system to flourish social partners' engagement needs to go beyond the advisory role, 'to take part in the governance of apprenticeship systems and to contribute to the design of curricula and their adaptation over time' (Business Europe, 2012, p. 4).

Each Member State faces different conditions regarding the status of industrial relations and thus differs in its options for involving the social partners. Furthermore, involvement, in terms of active engagement, needs time and can hardly be forced from one moment to the other. Therefore, it is important to support such a process from different angles.

Building social partners' capacity

Although strong social partners (in terms of representation and power) and a functioning social partnership do not guarantee high quality apprenticeship, they can have a favourable impact on it. Thus, it can be considered that measures to support the capacity building of employers' and employees' organisations also support the enhancement of apprenticeship and work-based learning. Capacity building can take place on various levels. On the individual level, it may refer to building up skills and providing training (human resource development). On the organisational level, it may include measures that aim at elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures (learning organisation). On the institutional level, it may refer to making legal and regulatory changes to enable social partner organisations (at all levels and in all sectors) to enhance their capacities. Finally, capacity building also includes financial means in terms of membership fees or state contributions (see for example the series of studies on capacity building for social dialogue in the EU by Eurofound).

Increasing social partners' roles and functions in the decision-making processes

In countries with a co-ordinated feedback mechanism between VET and the labour market, social partners are the main drivers in various intermediary bodies and act more or less autonomously. In others, this is not the case and the degree to which they are included in the governance also varies a lot both in terms of representativeness (e.g. number of board members) and influence (role as observer, advisory role or right to vote). Thus, there is an issue of increasing social partners' role and functions in the various advisory and decision-making bodies. An increasing level of responsibility also implies the need for greater capacity and vice versa (see above).

Social partners taking on responsibility for co-management

In many traditional apprenticeship systems, social partners are involved in the implementation of the apprenticeship systems (e.g. in the design of curricula or the final



examinations). While co-management of apprenticeship may not be an option for some countries, it can contribute to both the acceptance and sustainability of an apprenticeship system, and to better sharing of costs. Social partners should stepwise assume more responsibility. This could be illustrated by the case of final exams: at an initial step, social partners may occasionally participate as observers in examination boards; at a next step, they may become full members in examination boards, and finally, they may take full responsibility for the examination, including its organisation.

*In this initiative from **Germany**, the Alliance for Initial and Further Training shows how the involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders of VET and apprenticeship can be qualified by a new framework which unites all relevant actors in one alliance:*

A new alliance for vocational and further training was launched in Germany in 2015. The new alliance breaks with events of the past decade during which employers, ministries, other government institutions and the Federal Employment Agency had cooperated in the Pact on Apprenticeship, while the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) opposed the pact and did not participate. The new alliance, covering the period from 2015 to 2018, now unites all relevant actors under one umbrella. Alliance partners agreed to strengthen vocational training, reduce the number of school leavers without a certificate, and develop a new statistical system to assess the vocational training market. More apprenticeship/training positions are to be provided and more companies are being encouraged to train youngsters. Employers have promised to provide an annual 500,000 internship positions for pupils and another 20,000 apprenticeship positions, in addition to the positions already registered at the Federal Employment Agency. (Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2015 – 2018, <http://www.bmwi.de>)

*This example from **Hungary** shows how giving the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry a key role in developing occupational profiles and framework curricula helped increase work-based learning in companies and make VET programmes less theoretical:*

The government formed in 2010 in Hungary intended to raise participation in and the prestige of VET. VET should become less theoretical and include greater work-based learning, with more training in enterprises (inspired by countries with a strong apprenticeship system such as Germany). The prime minister and the president of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara) (MKIK) signed a framework agreement in November 2010 giving the MKIK a key role for VET-related tasks currently performed by the state. Subsequently, the MKIK was commissioned by the government to develop occupational profiles and framework curricula for 125 occupations, or nearly all skilled manual occupations in Hungary. This is just one example of the increasing role of social partners in the governance of VET in Hungary (Cedefop 2013).

*Similarly, this example from **Lithuania** shows how developing collaboration agreements with trade associations and involving them in planning, implementation and review of VET have enhanced work-based learning:*

In 2014-2015, the Ministry of Education and Science in Lithuania signed eight collaboration agreements with employers' associations to involve them in planning, implementation and review of VET. The agreements were made with employers' associations such as the Lithuanian Hotel and Restaurant Association, the Association of



Lithuanian Aviation Companies, the Lithuanian Electricity Association, the Lithuanian Apparel and Textile Industry Association and the Engineering Industries Association. The Ministry of Education and Science plans to sign further collaboration contracts in the future. As part of the deal, the associations agreed to work closely on solving issues linked to VET's legal framework, VET provision, work-based learning including apprenticeship, and to provide the ministry with information on demand for specialists and employment possibilities for VET graduates (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Lithuania).

*This example from **Norway** shows how a social contract between the government, the social partners and regional authorities has helped the delivery and completion of apprenticeships:*

In 2012, the Social Contract for VET (Samfunnskontrakten) was signed by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Government Affairs, the social partners and the regional authorities in Norway. The objective of the Social Contract for VET is to increase the number of training places and thus enable more pupils to complete their education with a certificate. The contract had three main objectives: 1) a 20% increase in the number of apprenticeship contracts by 2015; 2) an increase in the number of adults formalising their competence with a trade or journeyman's certificate; and 3) an increase in the number of apprentices that complete an apprenticeship and pass the exam (Source: Cedefop News, 2012). For further information: 'Norway - The social contract for VET' <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/norway-social-contract-vet>

Principle 4: Systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies

A continuous dialogue between all apprenticeship partners and involvement of social partners are important pre-conditions for high-quality apprenticeships that combine two learning venues, the VET school (or training centre) and the company. However, to be effective such a dialogue should not only concern negotiation of reforms, regulations and standards at national or regional level, but also local practices and the way VET schools or training centres and companies cooperate.

In addition to ensuring good quality apprenticeships, systematic cooperation between VET schools or training centres and companies can enhance a smooth transition from school to work. In particular, SMEs with limited administrative resources may benefit from such continuous cooperation and support, including access to skilled and specialised labour, access to regional innovation networks or other opportunities to improve their business activities. VET providers, on the other hand, can benefit from a continuous update on the skill needs, job profiles and the use of technology in companies.

Cooperation at local level

Systematic cooperation could imply that VET schools organise regular contacts/visits to the companies during the apprenticeship; this would not only benefit the apprentices, but also the trainer and the company. On-the-job learning (e.g. job shadowing) of VET



teachers or work placements of trainers in schools are further examples where companies and schools co-operate.

Business-Education Partnerships

Cooperation between VET schools and training centres and companies should not be limited exclusively to apprenticeships; there could also be partnerships on other issues, such as research, regional innovation or entrepreneurship. There could be guest lecturers from business in schools, job shadowing for teachers, and student visits in the workplace. Businesses and schools could work together on promoting the value of vocational education and training, raising the attractiveness of the teacher profession, and promoting the importance of education for economic and social development, including employability and social cohesion.

*This example from **France** shows how regular contact between the VET school/training centers and the training company can be organised in order to ensure the quality and completion of the apprenticeship:*

In France, VET school representatives regularly visit the apprentices in companies during the apprenticeship; for example, the VET school Campus des Métiers et de l'Entreprise conducts these types of visits. The visits may help to solve problems concerning the apprentice's working conditions and the relationship between the apprentice and the company. During one of these visits, an assessment of the apprentice's personal and professional skills takes place. The visits do not only benefit the apprentice and the companies. They also provide very valuable information to the teachers and the school about changes in the job and the labour market in general (Example was presented during the Working Group's in-depth country workshop in Paris, 26-27 June 2014).

*This example from **Denmark** shows how the cooperation between the VET school, the apprentice and the training company during the apprenticeship can be organised according to an agreement signed by the partners:*

In Denmark, apprenticeship training is systematically monitored and assessed in cooperation between the VET school and the training company. The training companies must issue interim evaluations to the apprentice and the school at the end of each completed period of workplace practical training. The interim evaluation is written in cooperation with the apprentice. The evaluation indicates areas of work and job functions assigned to the apprentice by the company. If the apprentice has special needs for further instruction and training, this will also be indicated. Forms for interim evaluation are made by the trade committees, and can be obtained at the schools.

(Danish Ministry of Education, 2008: The Danish Approach to Quality in Vocational Education and Training) <http://pub.uvm.dk/2008/vetquality2/hel.html>



Principle 5: Sharing costs and benefits to the mutual advantage of companies, VET providers and learners

Responsibilities, governance structures and financing models for apprenticeships vary considerably among Member States. According to the European Commission (2012) two main financing models can be identified:

- 1) *Public sector as the main source of finance.* In countries such as Sweden, Poland, Slovakia and Spain, where apprenticeship schemes are predominantly school-based, the public sector, i.e. national public funds as well as European funds such as the ESF or the Lifelong Learning Programme are the main source of finance.
- 2) *Sharing financing between enterprises, public sector, households and student.* In other countries, such as UK, Denmark, Austria, Germany and France, apprenticeship schemes are funded by the different participants (enterprises, public sector, households and students), and the enterprises are playing financially a much more important role than in the countries in the first case (European Commission, 2012 p. 73-74).

These two different financing models make it difficult to compare the financial support between the Member States and there is not a "one size fits all" solution that can be recommended. However, a general principle is that the financing of apprenticeships should be shared in a way that provides motivation for companies, VET schools or training centres as well as learners to engage in apprenticeships. This cost-sharing argument should be applied at the national, company and individual levels.

A simplified approach of sharing costs

It could be argued that the state, the companies and the individual learner should contribute equally. A simplified approach therefore could be that the state takes the responsibility for financing VET schools and VET teachers while the enterprises cover the costs of the company-based part of training (e.g. staff costs for trainers, operational costs of company-based training, costs for assessment and certification, costs related to the administration of the system, etc.). The apprentices bear some of the costs by accepting reduced wages during the training period. It must be noted that this rule does not apply to all contexts. Different kinds of systems ask for different kinds of cost-sharing. For example, in Finland, apprenticeship training has been favoured by adults and reduced wages might not be an option in that case.

Apprenticeships pay off for companies

At a company level, the argument of cost sharing could apply to an at least equal cost-benefit ratio for training companies, while the benefits can also be non-monetary (just as the state or the society in general benefits from an investment in education).

Many companies, especially SMEs, are reluctant to take on apprentices because they do not think the benefits (see also additional information on promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to employers in principle 6) outweigh the costs and because good-quality apprenticeships require large investments, which are difficult for small companies to make. In addition, employers may find the return on their investment uncertain if an



apprentice subsequently moves to another employer. However, there is evidence of significant net benefits for companies, primarily through lower recruitment costs but also through positive effects on the skills of supervisors and other staff. There can also be improved perception of the companies' brand and community commitment. These long-term benefits outweigh the short-term costs of time-loss and efforts for staff to supervise the trainees (Karlson & Persson, N.D.; Wolter & Ryan 2011). According to Wolter (2012), offering apprenticeships may benefit an employer in at least three ways:

- First, as apprentices work (part-time) for the training firm, the value of their productive contribution may already offset the firm's costs of providing training (i.e. material and infrastructure costs, and wages for instructors and apprentices).
- Second, a firm can use training as a screening device to identify the most talented and motivated apprentices. Although the apprenticeship contract expires at the end of training, the firm can always offer a work contract to the most able individuals (based on superior knowledge of the trainee's aptitudes that is not available to other firms) and thereby avoid costly mismatches.
- Third, a firm can train apprentices to its specific skills requirements - an increasingly important advantage in times of skilled-worker shortages in many industries that make it more difficult to fill vacancies with workers from the external labour market. An externally hired worker still needs to acquire specific skills during a period of adaptation that initially restricts the productivity of a new hire. In many cases, external hiring costs are substantially higher than the potential net investment associated with training an apprentice.

Fair apprentices' wages/ remunerations

At the individual level, the argument of balancing costs and benefits could be applied from the learners' point of view: with increasing skills and competences, the productivity of the apprentices' work also increases, so that she/he may expect higher wages. This further implies that apprentices' wages depend on the type of occupation and sector as well as on the duration of the apprenticeship. However, while the idea of sharing costs and benefits is obvious, in practice it can be quite challenging. For example, a lack of apprenticeship places provided by companies may force governments to increase their contributions, or less attractive apprenticeships may need financial incentives to be filled. Including apprenticeship wages in collective bargaining at sector level is one way of dealing with varying requirements of sectors, while ensuring some common standards. Nevertheless, the ideal size of the shares needs to be negotiated for each particular context and cannot be generally prescribed.

The Employers' Student Reimbursement Fund in Denmark exemplifies how training companies can be compensated financially during the apprentices' school-based training periods:

The wages paid by enterprises to apprentices during the time that the students attend school-based education and training (i.e. the main course or the basic course) are fully covered by the Employers' Student Reimbursement Fund (Arbejdsgivernes Elevrefusion, often referred to as AER). Student wages are set in the collective agreements between the social partners. They are also paid during school periods in the main programme. In



turn, the employer gets a refund corresponding to approximately 90% of the wages from the Employers' Reimbursement Fund. The employers finance the AER fund. All employers must pay a fixed sum per employee to the AER fund. All stakeholders appreciate the AER fund because it alleviates apprenticeship-derived costs for enterprises involved in this type of training, and at the same time, they share these costs with non-participating enterprises (Alizavova, 2013). For further information on the Danish VET system: <http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/Upper-secondary-education/Initial-Vocational-education-and-training-programmes>

*This example from **the Netherlands** shows how employers can be compensated by tax reduction and grants for having apprenticeships:*

In the Netherlands, companies can benefit from a general tax benefit resulting in a reduction in tax and social insurance contributions paid for BBL apprentices. Moreover, enterprises in a number of economic sectors can benefit from specific grants per apprentice provided by the existing sectoral training funds (European Commission, 2012).

*This example from **Poland** shows how the cost and benefits of apprenticeships can be shared by training companies, VET schools and training centres as well as learners. In particular, the Polish example shows how training companies and their in-company training supervisor can be supported financially for having apprentices:*

In Poland, the costs and benefits of apprenticeships are shared by training companies, VET schools and training centres as well as learners. Employers that train apprentices in the occupations covered by the classification of occupations for VET have the opportunity, based on the Minister of National Education's regulation on practical training in an occupational field, to receive the funding for:

- the remuneration of the practical training instructor that teaches the apprentices;
- the training allowance for the practical training instructor; and
- reimbursement of working clothes, shoes and other equipment needed for personal protection, required according to the specificity of work in a given profession and provided to apprentices.

Moreover, the practical training supervisor supervising students from technical schools at employer premises may be released from their duties for the period of students' placement in enterprises. In such cases, the training supervisor is entitled to the remuneration equal to the remuneration received during holiday leave. Additionally, the remuneration of apprentices is partially covered by the Labour Fund. For further information: <https://men.gov.pl/ministerstwo/informacje/refundowanie-pracodawcom-kosztow-prowadzonej-przez-nich-praktycznej-nauki-zawodu.html>

*This example from **Estonia** shows how a state-funded apprenticeship system can be combined with other arrangements:*

In Estonia, the state mainly funds apprenticeship. However, there can also be other arrangements to fund an apprenticeship programme depending on the agreement between the vocational education institution and the enterprise. If the training of the students is in the interest of the employer, the company may take on the entire financial burden related to the company-based training, whereas if the apprentice is sent to the



company by the school, the school pays the salary for the supervisor in the enterprise (Cedefop, 2009).

*This example from **Germany** shows how public-private financing arrangements can be organised in order to establish apprenticeship training centres that assist companies who are too specialised to cover the full curriculum:*

In Germany, the Intercompany Apprentice Training (IAT) at Intercompany Training Centres (ITCs) is a good example of a public-private partnership and cost sharing. The centres generally belong to the chambers of skilled crafts and assist companies to offer a high-quality standard in apprenticeship training. IAT helps to ensure that the full curriculum is covered, although the training company is highly specialised. It supports technology transfer, which prepares the skilled craft sector for the future. Moreover, by making use of practice-based and action-oriented training methods, inter-company instruction raises the quality of vocational education. IAT is publicly funded and the running costs are shared between the federal government, the regional government and the skilled craft enterprises. For further information: Inter-company vocational training centres, <http://www.bibb.de/en/741.php>

SUPPORT FOR COMPANIES, IN PARTICULAR SMES, OFFERING APPRENTICESHIPS

"It is important to focus on companies with no prior experience with apprentices that may need both financial and non-financial support measures."

"...focusing only on the enterprises' needs may risk being a too narrow approach. It is important that apprentices also have the opportunity to develop general skills..."

"... Member States should consider grading the financial support to companies, i.e. starting with higher subsidies for companies that take on apprentices for the first time."

"...apprenticeships can also play an important role regarding the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people who are often not in employment, education or training."

"Companies' support is crucial for trainers' continuous professional development...."





2 Support for companies, in particular SMEs, offering apprenticeships

Principle 6: Supporting measures that make apprenticeships more attractive and accessible to SMEs

Companies benefit from apprenticeships because they can provide a stable supply of employees specifically skilled for the company. At the same time, however, companies face challenges related to apprenticeships such as administrative tasks, organising apprenticeship trainers, cooperation with VET schools, etc. In most cases, companies prefer to hire a skilled worker rather than to train one because apprenticeships require time, money and human resources.

Such resources are scarce, particularly in SMEs. Evidence shows that SMEs are less likely to provide apprenticeships than large companies (Cedefop, 2014a). Therefore, specific support measures are needed to motivate SMEs and to make apprenticeships more accessible and manageable to them. The following sections present possible measures that address typical challenges for SMEs.

Promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to employers

Many companies, particularly SMEs, do not see a net benefit in introducing apprenticeships. In addition, employers may find the return on their investment uncertain because apprentices may want to move to another company after their training. Although apprenticeships can be a burden to employers, there are also benefits to employers of which the employers are often unaware. Below are listed some examples of benefits that can be promoted systematically among employers. The examples are taken from Kensington and Chelsea Colleges' employer information (KCC, 2015).

- Apprenticeships allow the business to secure a supply of people with the specific skills and qualities that the business requires and that may not be available on the external job market. Recruiting apprentices enables employers to fill the skill gaps that exist within their current workforce as apprentices begin to learn sector-specific skills from day one.
- Apprenticeships can help secure a supply of skilled young recruits - especially important for the replacement of an ageing workforce.
- Apprentices tend to be more loyal and stay with the organisation, which can reduce labour turnover.
- Apprenticeship training could increase interest in training among other employees and create a 'training culture'.
- Apprentices can bring new ideas and innovation to the business
- Apprenticeship schemes could result in an enhanced reputation for the business both within the industry and in the local community.

In the UK, employer survey statistics on apprenticeships show positive results on their benefits (Skillstraining UK, 2015):



- 80% companies that invest in apprentices have reported a significant increase in employee retention.
- 77% of employers believe apprenticeships make them more competitive.
- 76% of those employers that employ apprentices agree they make their workplace more productive.
- 81% of consumers favour using a company that takes on apprentices.
- 92% of employers that employ apprentices believe that apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce.
- 83% of employers that employ apprentices rely on their apprenticeship programme to provide the skilled workers they will need in the future.

Promoting a training culture among SMEs

Compared to large companies, many SMEs have a less advanced training culture and limited training budgets. As an apprenticeship should be regarded as an investment, efforts may be needed to make SMEs more aware of the benefits that offering apprenticeships can provide for SMEs, such as providing them with skilled employees tailored for the company. Promoting a training culture can be done by launching campaigns or company visits targeting SMEs combined with guidance and support highlighting the benefits and the returns on investment of offering apprenticeships. VET schools and training providers may play a key role in helping SMEs, and experience shows a proactive training provider is a key to success.

To arrange collaborative, external training for SMEs that cannot provide training for a full apprenticeship

Some companies may be too small or specialised to cover the whole curriculum of an apprenticeship. There are many possibilities to alleviate such problems either by training alliances or by external training centres jointly sponsored by companies or the state. Intermediary bodies have a key role as brokers to bring companies together and mediate their interests.

Providing start-up information and tool kits that help SMEs

Training regulations need to be as accessible and understandable as possible for SMEs to facilitate the organisation and administration of work-based learning and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens and costs. Some Member States have developed guidelines providing user-friendly information or tool kits for SMEs without previous experience.

Matching services

Search and recruitment of potential apprentices may also be a burden to SMEs. Therefore, SMEs could be helped by services that facilitate matching of potential apprentices with SMEs interested in training apprentices. In some countries, intermediary bodies, including Public Employment Services (PES) are engaging to this end (see the French example). In many countries, VET schools and VET training centres also offer services to match the apprenticeships offered by companies better with apprentices searching for such opportunities.



*This example from **Austria** shows how training alliances between companies can facilitate apprenticeships:*

In Austria, the Federal Chamber of Economics, WKÖ, actively supports training alliances between companies and training institutions. These mainly involve complementary training measures conducted either in another company by mutual exchange or one-sided by sending apprentices to a company or suitable educational institution. The Regional Economic Chambers, often in cooperation with the provincial government or the Chamber of Labour, have set-up special entities to facilitate the formation of training alliances by providing information on possible partner enterprises and educational institutions, and by finding suitable apprentices. They also advise on the prevailing legal obligations concerning training contracts, subsidies, conditions of employment, and training requirements for a certain occupational profile (<http://www.wko.at>).

*This example from **France** shows how apprenticeships can be made more accessible to companies, in particular SMEs, by establishing a matching service:*

France has established a matching service to support the provision of apprenticeships in SMEs. CGPME, the Confederation of SMEs, has mandated its intermediary body AGEFA-PME to support the provision of apprenticeships in small enterprises. A web-service portal provides a broad range of services for small enterprises, including up-to-date information on apprenticeship tax credit and regional aids, a national database on potential apprentices to facilitate recruitment and a competence-based search engine on qualifications and training centres. A methodological toolbox for apprentices and tutors equips young people with strong basic skills to allow a successful integration into a small business. The tool advises on applying for apprenticeship positions, teaches interview training and soft skills to prepare young people for the business world, and facilitates the understanding of SME values, i.e. versatility, autonomy and creativity. As a result, young people are more motivated, more likely to complete an apprenticeship and more productive (<http://www.agefa.org/>).

*Similarly, in **the UK** the government has established the service 'Apprenticeship Vacancies' to make apprenticeships more accessible to companies:*

The service 'Apprenticeship Vacancies' is an on-line service where apprenticeships and companies can find each other. Employers can register and log into the webpage where they can advertise apprenticeship vacancies. Apprenticeship Vacancies is the official job site for apprenticeships in England, and is managed by the National Apprenticeship Service. The system enables quality vacancies from employers to be viewed and applied for nationally by thousands of candidates that register in the system. This improves the employers' recruitment of apprentices because many candidates see their vacancies. Furthermore, the website provides information about training providers and many other available services.

*The Jobstarter programme in **Germany** is an example of how to organise collaboration between SMEs to coordinate training and apprenticeship delivery:*

The Jobstarter programme facilitates that companies cooperate closely with the training counsellors at the chambers of industry and commerce, the Federal Employment Agency and other education providers. Jobstarter provides support to two types of collaborative training. In type 1, the contracting partner responsible for the apprentice is a leading



company. In type 2, a Jobstarter staff member is responsible for coordinating the training. The training network organises suitable partner companies. In addition, professional organisations assist SMEs in the development of in-firm training, matching with suitable apprentices, and in the training process regarding pedagogical and administrative problems. For further information: www.jobstarter.de

*Similar to the German example above, this example from **Switzerland** shows how cooperation between companies delivering apprenticeships can be financed:*

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) confederation SERI provides initial funding to support the establishment of multi-company collaboration in the field of apprentice training. Multi-company collaboration makes it possible to enable broad practical VET training in several specialised companies. The goal of multi-company collaboration in VET is to broaden the apprenticeship market. SMEs that are too specialised to offer the training in all areas specified in the training curriculum get the chance to train apprentices together and share the cost and time invested in the training. SERI has the capability to support the establishment of multi-company collaboration in VET with initial funding. See examples at <http://www.lehrbetriebsverbund.ch>, <http://www.login.org>.

Principle 7: Finding the right balance between the specific skill needs of training companies and the general need to improve the employability of apprentices

The implementation of good-quality apprenticeships requires significant investments (financial, infrastructure, human, etc.). Understandably, most employers want to tailor the training to the specific skill needs of the company to help offset these costs. However, focusing only on the enterprises' needs may risk being a too narrow approach. It is important that apprentices also have the opportunity to develop general skills and competences covering 'whole professions' and ensuring their general employability in view of future job opportunities. Hence, it is necessary to strike the right balance between the company-specific skill needs of the employer and the general employability of the apprentice.

Labour market responsiveness is important irrespective of whether school-based or work-based learning VET predominates. However, the risk that training does not meet current or future labour market needs tends to be higher in school-based VET systems. In countries (e.g. Austria, Denmark and Germany) with demand-led systems and a high level of employer commitment, the labour market responsiveness is to some extent 'built into' the system (Steedman, 2005). This means that young people cannot begin their apprenticeship until they have found a training offer and have signed a contract with the employer. In contrast, the UK and the Swedish system can be defined as a supply-led system in which training places are offered mostly because training providers approach employers and ask for openings (Steedman, 2005).



In order to ensure the employability of young people, the content and the provision of apprenticeships must be reviewed continuously in view of the labour market needs while respecting the skill needs of the individual training company.

A formal procedure for the approval of training companies and involvement of sectorial social partners

Ensuring a balance between the specific skill needs of training companies and the general employability of apprentices should require an approval procedure for being acknowledged as a training company. In this context, it is important to involve social partners that have sector-specific expertise. They are therefore key players in defining the skills and competences required and in setting quality standards.

Systematic apprentice marketing at regional level

Systematic marketing efforts at the regional level may be needed to contact and motivate employers to provide apprenticeships. As employers' need for apprenticeships may differ across regions, the regional level may be appropriate for marketing efforts. The example from Switzerland below shows that apprenticeship marketing is a cantonal task, as the cantonal VET and professional educational training (PET) offices are familiar with the conditions in their regions.

*The trade committees (de faglige udvalg) in **Denmark** are an example of how social partners can be involved in the approval of training companies:*

The trade committees, in which the social partners are represented in equal numbers, carry out the approval of training companies. The interested company must send an application to the trade committee within the respective branch consisting of representatives from the sector of social partners. The trade committee assesses whether the company is able to carry out the practical training in order to obtain the goals within the specific education and training programme and offer satisfactory training conditions. Companies with a reasonable quantity of employees and the necessary array of tasks will get an approval without limitations. However, if the company does not have a wide range of tasks, it might instead be eligible for a combination training agreement (European Commission, 2012). The trade committees define the content of the education and training programmes, including the division between practical training and school-based learning and seek to ensure that IVET is in line with labour market needs (Cedefop, 2012a).

*The National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ) in **Portugal** is an example of how a systematic framework of qualifications can help establish a systematic overview of supply and demand of qualifications:*

The NCQ plays a key role in increasing the labour market relevance of VET. The NCQ is a dynamic tool for the strategic management of national non-higher qualifications that promotes the effective link between the competences necessary to the social and economic development of the country and the qualifications developed within the NQS. The catalogue ensures the connection to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and each qualification is referenced to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In order to better match the supply and demand for the qualifications, 16 Sector Councils for Qualification were created (a structure from the NQS). They are working groups with



technical and advisory competences and are responsible for updating and developing the NCQ. Further information: <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt>

*This example from **Switzerland** shows how the marketing for apprenticeship placements can be organised at local (cantonal) level. The federal government may provide additional financial incentives if the local marketing is unsuccessful:*

In Switzerland, apprenticeship marketing is a cantonal task. The most important apprenticeship marketing measures are:

- VET promotion agents deal directly with companies, encouraging them to create apprenticeship positions
- Information and advice on careers
- Apprenticeship records
- Creation of host company networks
- Provision of state-sponsored transitional options (mainly bridge-year courses)
- Placement and individual mentoring of young people who have been unable to find a suitable apprenticeship.

The VET/PET offices at cantonal level assess the number of available apprenticeships (apprenticeship records), take suitable measures at the right time and offer individual support to young people in their search for an apprenticeship position. Structural changes, economic fluctuations, host company ratio, demographic changes and interests of young people are all determining factors that influence the apprenticeship market. If the apprenticeship situation is disadvantageous, the federal government may step in to offer additional financial incentives for apprenticeship marketing and support of specific VET-related projects, which aid the host companies indirectly to stay attractive for young people.

For further information:

<http://www.beratungsdienste-aargau.ch/berufswahlstudienwahl/beruf-schule-finden-und-wählen.html>; <http://www.berufsbildugplus.ch>

Principle 8: Focusing on companies having no experience with apprenticeships

Many companies have no experience with apprenticeships. Even in Member States with a long apprenticeship tradition, such as Denmark, about 70% of all businesses have no apprentices. This means there is an unrealized potential to increase the capacity for apprenticeships. Member States should therefore reflect on how to attract these companies through financial or non-financial means.

Financial support measures

Financial support measures can be an incentive to motivate companies to invest in apprenticeships. Public subsidies can help increase the provision of apprenticeships. Empirical evidence shows that companies' offer is related positively to the size of the



subsidy spent on apprenticeships. However, the effect varies considerably between sectors and professions (Westergaard-Nielsen et al., 2000). Direct subsidies appear to be effective in encouraging firms to start training apprentices but do not increase the demand for apprentices in firms that already have apprentices. Consequently, Member States should consider grading the financial support to companies, i.e. starting with higher subsidies for companies that take on apprentices for the first time. The subsidy level for subsequent apprentices can then be decreased substantially year by year.

Non-financial support measures

Non-financial support measures are important to qualify and prepare the training company for the responsibility of hosting apprentices. The support measures may help new training companies with various formalities and administrative tasks of implementing an apprenticeship. Many companies, especially SMEs with no apprenticeship experience, may require external help for the following basic tasks: accreditation as a training company; identification of the company's skill needs; recruitment procedures, training and instruction of in-company trainers including the preparation of training guidelines; administrative procedures and the assessment and the certification of apprentices. These tasks could be used as an inspiration for developing a broad set of support measures that assist companies, particularly 'first timers', in implementing good-quality apprenticeships. In addition, campaigns, skills competitions and awards could be envisaged (see principle 15). Public authorities could also include apprenticeship training at the company level as a pre-condition in public procurement procedures.

Financial support measures

The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) in the UK is an example of a financial support measure that targets employers that have never provided apprenticeships before or have not provided them in the last 12 months:

The AGE is driven by a government priority to respond to the high rate of youth unemployment. It provides apprenticeship grants (worth £1,500) to employers with up to 1,000 employees recruiting 16- to 24-year olds to encourage them to take on new apprentices. The AGE supports businesses that would not otherwise be in a position to recruit individuals into employment through the Apprenticeship programme. Most members (80%) of the business organisation London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) are SMEs, and LCCI finds that the financial support is helpful but not enough. Most members say that they need more general support in terms of guidance and information. Therefore, LCCI has made it a top priority to get the message of the campaign out to its members. One aim of the AGE programme is to achieve at least 50% of AGE apprenticeships in small businesses (with 50 or fewer employees), and that at least 50% of AGE apprentices should be aged 16 to 18 when starting their apprenticeship. These aims have been achieved with the majority of AGE apprentices being in the 16-18-year age range, and the large majority of AGE-supported employers having fewer than 50 employees. In addition, AGE apprenticeships have yielded good progression into employment and positive effects with encouraging employers to take on apprentices for the first time.

(Apprenticeship UK: <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/steps-to-make-it-happen/incentive.aspx>).



Non-financial support measures

*This example from **Austria** shows how support measures for companies can be provided by intermediate bodies. The advantage of letting such non-governmental intermediate bodies manage the main part of company contact is that the companies regard them as 'their own':*

The governance of the apprenticeship system is characterised by co-ownership. Government authorities (the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth) have only limited direct contact with companies. Instead, intermediate bodies, such as economic chambers of commerce, training providers, the social partners, etc., handle the main contact to companies. The companies regard the economic chambers of commerce and other professional bodies as 'their own' organisations. Support measures for companies are in place before, during and after the training takes place. Before the apprenticeship, for example, the company receives accreditation as a training company and as having trainer qualifications. In the selection process, there are support tools for recruiting apprentices. During the training, companies can use training guidelines and quality assurance checklists. The lesson is the importance of passing all information on to the companies in a user-friendly, 'business language' format (IBW, 2013). For further information: the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, <http://www.en.bmwf.at/Seiten/default.aspx>

*Similarly, the Semta Apprenticeship Service in **the UK** is an example of a sector-specific outreach effort promoting apprenticeships among SMEs in the engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors:*

The Semta Apprenticeship Service offers employers assistance with making it easy to take on and up-skill apprentices. The assistance is carried out by apprenticeship coordinators. They handle all administration, recruitment and customised training arrangements, and mentor each apprentice. The Semta Apprenticeship Service is currently working with 880 apprentices placed with 190 companies of all sizes in the engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors across England. According to Semta, the success rate for their apprenticeship programme is 88% compared to the national average of 77% (<http://www.semta.org.uk/factsfigures>).

Principle 9: Supporting companies providing apprenticeships for disadvantaged learners

VET and apprenticeship schemes play an important role as regards the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people who are often not in employment, education or training (NEETs), and in combating drop-outs and early leaving. However, this may imply extra costs for companies providing apprenticeships, particularly for those who have learning difficulties and or social/mental problems. Consequently, in order to enable companies to promote social inclusion, financial as well as non-financial support measures are needed.



Financial support measures

Financial support measures can be used to compensate companies for the extra costs they may incur when taking in young people with special learning needs as apprentices. Most countries provide financial subsidies, but some of them are also concerned that such subsidies may be counterproductive.

Non-financial support measures

Non-financial support measures could help the management of companies and in-company trainers in the use of special tools and equipment in learning situations, such as young people with a hearing impairment. Several countries have put in place specific coaching or mentoring systems.

Recent studies show that successful inclusion of students with special educational needs requires a comprehensive and coherent strategy. Some of the key success factors are:

- a legal framework that allows VET institutions to offer different levels of apprenticeship with different curricula leading to different qualification levels;
- a learner-centred approach tailoring goals, curricula, pedagogical approaches and materials and assessment methods to individual needs with particular focus on the learners' capabilities;
- highly qualified VET school trainers and in-company trainers and support staff that cooperate to ensure an individualised apprenticeship programme that matches the capabilities of the apprentice;
- establishment of cooperative structures between VET schools and local companies and policy makers that help schools establish and maintain resilient connections with local employers; and
- competent staff providing follow-up support activities, for as long as required, addressing the needs of employers and young graduates to maintain learners' employment in companies (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2013).

In Austria, the programme 'Integrative VET' is an example of a support measure which helps to provide disadvantaged young people with a VET qualification and integrate them into working life:

The length of the apprenticeship depends on the chosen path and varies from 12 to 36 months. 80% of the workplace learning takes place in a training centre financed by the Austrian PES (AMS) or in a company, while 20% is school education and training. The possibility of a tailored training scheme enables companies, specific autonomous training establishments and part-time vocational schools to cater for individual abilities and skills and meet individual needs. Hence, the possibility of a tailored scheme makes it easier for companies to manage the implementation of an apprenticeship. An evaluation shows that the company-based programme is more effective than the training centre-based in terms of employment outcomes. One month after completing the programme, 76% of the company-based apprentices are in employment compared to only 20% of the



training centre based apprentices. (Dörflinger et al., 2009)

*The programme 'JOBSTARTER - Für die Zukunft ausbilden (Training for the Future)' in **Germany** is a similar example of a support measure that helps training companies having apprentices with special learning needs:*

The Federal Employment Agency (BA) assists companies that recruit apprentices with special needs (i.e. disabled persons, young people with learning difficulties or social disadvantages, young people who have been searching for a training place for more than one year). The local employment agency decides whether to grant training assistance in each individual case and bears the costs of the particular measure. Assistance is also provided for training management and socio-pedagogical coaching. Companies can receive assistance if they decide to train young people with learning disabilities or social disadvantages. Assistance is given by a specialised educational service provider and comprises administrative and organisational assistance as well as accompanying coaching. Most JOBSTARTER projects offer external training management to SMEs. Such free support reduces the burden on in-house trainers (German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2013). For further information: <http://www.jobstarter.de/>

*The new federal initiative 'Education Chains' (Bildungsketten) in **Germany** is another example of a support measure that helps young people in the transition from general education into vocational education:*

The initiative supports young people to prepare for their general school certificate and their vocational education. The programme supports the transition from school to training and during the apprenticeship training process, but also providing SMEs in particular with appropriate apprentices. The analyses of hidden potentials (class 8), practical vocational orientation periods (class 9), in-firm 'Praktika' and individual pedagogical assistance and long term support from school (class 8) to apprenticeship are core elements of the initiative, in which the federal level, the Länder and the federal employment service join their programmes in a holistic and step-by-step strategy and philosophy. From 2015-2018, 500,000 students in about 3,000 schools will receive standardised analysis of their potentials and vocational orientation programmes, and about 115,000 students will benefit from the long-term individual support and coaching by professional 'buddies' from school to apprenticeship training, in particular in SMEs. You can read more about the initiative at <http://www.elgpn.eu/elgpndb/view/45>. For further information: <http://www.bildungsketten.de/>

Principle 10: Motivating and supporting companies to assign qualified trainers and tutors

Trainers/tutors can be defined as persons (employees) in the training company responsible for training and supporting the apprentice during the apprenticeship. The trainer/tutor is usually a worker with relevant work experience in the company and with pedagogical skills to interact appropriately with apprentices.



In small enterprises, trainers/tutors usually work on a part time basis in addition to their primary job tasks while large companies often have full-time trainers who can concentrate on providing vocational training in their firm only. Trainers/tutors are usually appointed by the company, although in some countries (i.e. Estonia, Spain or Poland) the vocational school has the right to assess whether the person is suitable for the training and the supervising duties involved (European Commission, 2012).

In order to ensure the quality of apprenticeship programmes, Member States are in a position to establish quality frameworks defining minimum skill requirements for trainers/tutors and their cooperation with the apprentices and the schools. However, if these frameworks become too detailed, this could become a disincentive to companies' recruitment of apprentices. Therefore, in-company trainers should not be regarded as 'teachers' who have to pass pedagogical programmes equivalent to teachers at schools. In its guiding principles, the Thematic Working Group on Trainers in VET did not advise on having a formal qualification as a requirement for trainers/tutors. Basic requirements for apprenticeship trainers/tutors should be the following:

- The trainer/tutor is an experienced worker/employee with a specified number of years of previous work experience in the area in question.
- The trainer/tutor has the possibility to acquire and constantly update the necessary training-related competences to oversee the practical training and acquisition of work experience of apprentices/trainees in the workplace.

Principles on how to support companies

The support to companies may be inspired by the following principles, developed by the Thematic Working Group:

- Trainers are lifelong learners, so recognise their identity and work and support their lifelong learning. Different learning opportunities, including those available for VET teachers as well as for adult educators, should be brought to the attention of trainers in enterprises. Renewal of certificates may be considered as a way of ensuring that trainers maintain and update their competences.
- Companies' support is crucial for trainers' continuous professional development, so raise awareness of benefits and get companies on board in supporting training and trainers. Policies should envisage and provide support to companies wishing to train apprentices or develop their employees' skills.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises are important players, so provide targeted support. Public measures to support training by SMEs should aim at providing flexible solutions and ensuring quick provision of the necessary competences, while simultaneously focusing on areas that stimulate and offer SMEs a way to systematise their training practices.
- Trainers' competence development benefits from a systematic approach, so define what trainers need, provide training and learning opportunities and recognise competences. If a country aims at better recognition of in-company trainers' work and improved professionalisation, a systematic approach should be considered. Three main elements form the support system for trainers' continuous professional development: 1) qualification or competence standards and availability of qualifications or certificates; 2) flexible and relevant training provision; and 3) opportunities to get competences validated and recognised.



- Supporting trainers in companies is a shared responsibility, so ensure effective cooperation and coordination between governments, sectoral organisations (chambers, trade unions etc.) and VET providers.

The last element implies that the government should establish the overall framework for apprentice trainers in close cooperation with the social partners. The provision of support to apprentice trainers should be designed in consultation with the employers and be carried out by intermediate bodies that represent the social partners and trade organisations.

*This example from **Germany** shows how minimum qualification requirements for in-company trainers and training companies can be defined:*

In Germany, according to the VET legislation, trainers should be qualified in the specific or another relevant occupation and have acquired via an exam a trainer qualification according to the ordinance (regulation) on trainer aptitude (AEVO). AEVO outlines minimum requirements and is supported by enterprises. To qualify as a training company, at least one skilled worker, who coordinates other skilled worker-apprentice tutors, should have passed the exam. For SMEs, The German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) has developed guidelines for trainers in SMEs. The aim is to support skilled workers who provide training by making their tasks easier and helping them improve. The guidelines propose ways of how to cope with difficult situations based on input from heads of training, trainers, skilled workers experienced in training, lecturers and training experts.

*This example from **Malta** shows how financial as well as non-financial support to in-company trainers can be organised in a training programme:*

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) runs a training programme which enables in-company trainers as well as those who anticipate taking up a trainer role to give more effective on-the-job training to new employees. The ETC emphasises that their competence-based training programmes reflect labour market needs for better skilled in-company trainers in Malta, since they are designed in consultation with employers. The programme provides participants with the knowledge and skills to assess training needs and then design and deliver effective on-the-job training programmes in a motivating manner. The programme is compulsory for those who do not have other relevant training qualifications or equivalent and would like to be considered as eligible trainers for the current training grants schemes operated by the ETC. More specifically, if a company applies for financial assistance for training from the ETC, their trainers, whether in-house or external, must have successfully completed the train-the-trainers programme (or an equivalent programme that may be delivered by another institution approved by the ETC). The ETC provides financial assistance to companies that invest in the training of their employees, and the subsidy varies according to the type of training and the size of the enterprise. The train-the-trainer programme is delivered by the Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE) established in 1999 in consultation with the Federation of Industry and the Department of Education. For further information: <http://www.etc.gov.mt/Index.aspx>

*The Foundation for Occupational Advancement (AEL) in **Finland** is an example of how training of in-company trainers can be organised in a flexible and customer-oriented way:*



The AEL provides tailored solutions for companies including open courses and seminars and formal vocational training leading to qualifications within the framework of the official VET and CVET system. AEL's approach is that instead of providing ready-made solutions, holistic solutions are developed based on customer needs, use of interest group-centred methods, and teamwork. The new focus of the company led to close examination of the required and existing trainer competences and skills and identifying the support and training needed for them to acquire such competences. An electronic register of competences has been designed to help address these issues. Every year, trainers voluntarily enter information about their continuing professional development and updated qualifications, competences and skills, work experience, and even hobbies. The information is based on developmental discussions with the trainer's supervisor and complemented by team evaluation. Developmental discussions also help identify any further learning needs and set out a support plan. To design and deliver a training course, a team is set up based on the goals and learning needs of the client. The electronic register of competences helps identify the most relevant trainers for a specific training assignment and meet the customer's training needs best. For further information: www.ael.fi

ATTRACTIVENESS OF APPRENTICESHIPS AND IMPROVED CAREER GUIDANCE

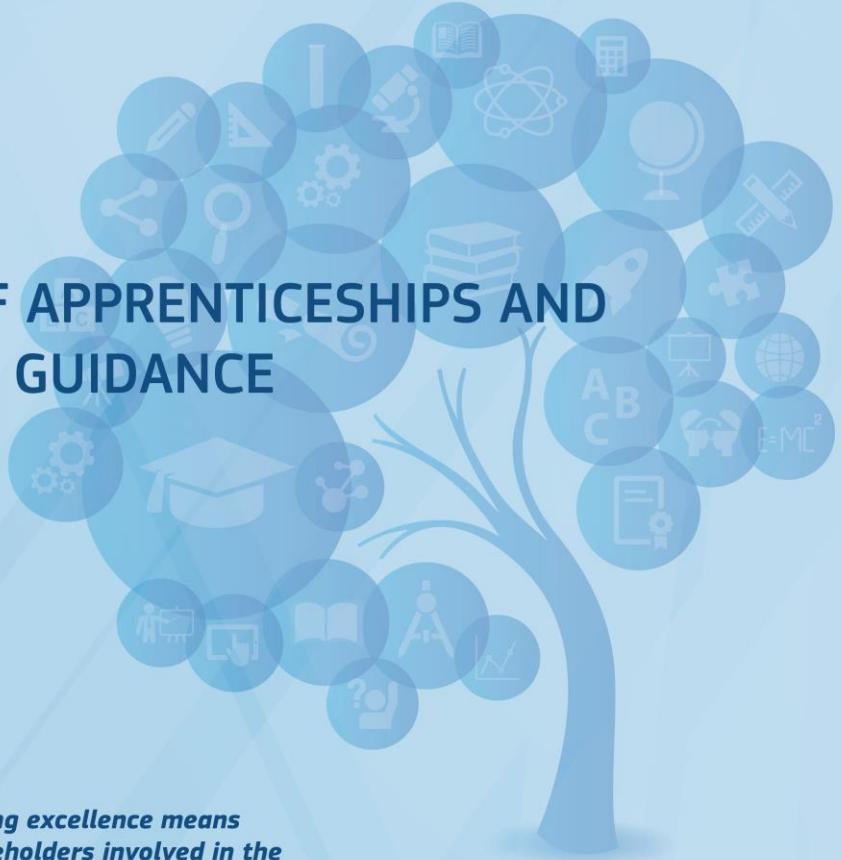
"In order to make VET and apprenticeships more attractive it is important that they are not perceived as a 'dead end' that makes it difficult to move to other educational or career paths."

"Promoting excellence means that all stakeholders involved in the provision of VET including apprenticeships ... should attempt to enhance the professional pride of their vocational trade ..."

"Good career guidance helps young people make well-informed and sustainable educational choices that match their capabilities."

"Whether young people find learning attractive largely depends on their relationship with and the competences of the teaching and training staff."

"Awareness-raising activities such as work 'tasters' and job shadowing can help young people to make well-founded choices on education and career."





3 Attractiveness of apprenticeships and improved career guidance

Principle 11: Promoting the permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways

Traditionally, education and training systems have separate subsystems (general, vocational and academic/higher education) related to one another in a strict hierarchy (primary, secondary and tertiary level). This works well as long as learners follow a predefined route in their chosen area and subsystem. However, this segmentation creates institutional barriers that can restrict the learners' options when moving vertically to higher levels of learning or moving horizontally to study a different subject at the same level. Hence, learners in VET often have to specialise at an early age making it difficult for them to switch to or combine with academic studies later on.

In order to make VET and apprenticeships more attractive it is important that they are not perceived as a 'dead end' that makes it difficult to move to other educational or career paths. Consequently, horizontal as well as vertical permeability should be promoted by integrating VET into education systems. Broadening access to higher education is regarded as important in order to make more people enter tertiary education. The Europe 2020 Strategy sets the headline target that at least 40% of 30-34 year olds should have a tertiary or equivalent qualification by 2020.

However, permeability should be promoted in a balanced way, and not just by creating 'a perceived way out of VET', thus reducing VET to a stepping-stone to higher education.

The horizontal and vertical permeability between VET and other parts of the educational system can make IVET an attractive alternative for young people – both for those who want to go directly from school to work as well as those who want to go into higher-level education. The following sections present various ways to increase the permeability between VET and other parts of the educational system.

General knowledge and transversal skills at all levels of VET

Horizontal and vertical permeability requires that general knowledge and transversal skills and competences are part of the curriculum at all levels of VET. In contrast, if IVET was reduced to narrow technical skills, then it would seriously limit individuals' ability to change educational path and so make permeability impossible (Cedefop, 2012b). The Danish example below exemplifies that the introduction of general subjects in VET can increase the opportunities to progress to higher education, but that is a challenge to motivate the students to take advantage of those opportunities.

Making 'higher VET programmes' at tertiary level more visible

While promoting permeability it is important to highlight that the boundaries between VET and higher education are becoming increasingly blurred. VET has traditionally been provided by (upper) secondary education institutions and been understood as such by policy-makers. However, in some countries VET programmes have been established at tertiary level. Characterising VET at tertiary education level is difficult since this concept stretches the boundary of education and training systems normally in use, such as initial



VET, continuous VET and higher education (HE) (Cedefop, 2011b). In the Cedefop study, tertiary level VET is defined as vocationally oriented qualifications associated to learning outcomes meeting specific requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and competence at levels 6 to 8 in the EQF. Tertiary level VET refers mainly to VET education offered at the highest levels outside formal academic higher education (Cedefop, 2011b).

For example, France and Denmark have established higher-education VET programmes in the field of agrofood economics (see Danish example below), while Norway and the UK have established programmes providing specific training after basic nursing qualifications (Cedefop, 2011b). In general, many young people and their parents may have limited knowledge of such higher VET programmes. Increasing the attractiveness of VET requires that such higher-education VET programmes be promoted in a better way than they are now.

Improving VET graduates' formal access to higher education

Improving VET graduates' formal access to higher education can be done in various ways: examination systems that are open to all secondary students; additional preparatory courses or exams for IVET students (bridging programmes); acknowledging equivalent vocational qualifications for academic study courses (credit transfer arrangements); and introducing specialised vocational-oriented courses at tertiary level. Austria, for example, recently launched the initiative 'Lehre mit Matura', which enables persons who have completed a VET qualification to move directly to relevant studies at the tertiary level (see Austrian example below). In 2009, Germany's Standing Conference of Education Ministers for the German Länder decided that successful graduates from IVET programmes should be entitled to move to higher education after successfully completing an assessment of their ability to study. By allowing IVET-graduates to continue to higher education, Germany hopes that IVET will become more attractive to high-achieving cohorts. Similarly, Denmark has introduced a new examination at secondary level, EUX, which is a combined four-year vocational and academic education programme which prolongs the upper secondary education by one year. A student receiving a EUX qualification will be able to gain access to the HE system on equal terms with applicants from upper secondary schools. This will create a new linkage between VET and higher education.

Validation of prior learning

Validation or recognition of prior learning can be an important tool to promote permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways. Enabling and encouraging formal access to education or training is an important first step. However, in order to be effective, permeability must also enable learners to transfer all types of prior learning – formal, non-formal or informal – wherever that learning took place, at school, work or during leisure time. By validating prior learning, it can be decided that an entrant may gain access to certain forms of education and training or be admitted to a specific course or programme, be exempt from certain parts of it, or have prior learning recognised as equivalent to a particular qualification.

Most Member States emphasise recognition of formal qualifications as a way to enhance permeability while exemptions from courses and programmes based on recognition and accreditation of prior learning are less common. However, experiences with validation in several countries (such as Finland, France, Norway, the Netherlands) show that it is possible to move in this direction.



Enhance transparency and parity of esteem

In order to enhance the attractiveness of VET, EQF and NQF can be important tools to enhance transparency.

NQF can increase the attractiveness of VET qualifications by valuing the associated learning outcomes in a way that is comparable to general and higher education. Thus, a general education qualification may be placed at the same level as a VET qualification, and a VET qualification at the same level as a higher education qualification. This can enhance a parity of esteem between VET and other educational paths.

*This example from **the Netherlands** shows how validation of formal qualifications can be organised in cooperation with the social partners and other stakeholders:*

In the Netherlands, educational institutes and sector organisations develop qualifications in an organised setting under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. Occupational profiles and input from field experts are used to determine the qualifications that are nationally recognised. External legitimacy by stakeholders, such as employers and trade unions within a specific industry, is the key requirement for recognition of these qualifications. If these standards are acknowledged by the industry and approved by the Labour Foundation, they can be used in an Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedure by a certified APL provider (see <http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/werknemers/english>).

*This example from **France** shows how validation of prior learning and qualifications with reference to the EQF levels can be organised:*

In France, the umbrella organisation of skilled craft chambers (APCMA) develops professional certificates on demand and in strong cooperation with professional organisations. One emblematic title is the "Master" title at EQF level 5 in higher VET validating the qualification of a highly qualified professional in the craft and his/her capacity to manage and run a craft business and train apprentices. The title is accessible through apprenticeship training or further training. To develop the qualification, an analysis, followed by a test phase of 2-3 years, is organised before applying for registration in the French national qualification framework. The registration is delivered on the basis of four major criteria:

1. Added value of the professional qualification as regards identified skills needs;
2. Accordance between certification objectives and the employment situation of holders of the title;
3. Consistency between the competences issued and validated compared to what can be expected from the holder of the title at work and in the professional field targeted; and
4. The implementation of validation of prior experience as required by the national rules in force.

For further information: <http://www.artisanat.fr> and <http://www.qa-hivet.net>

*This example from **Romania** shows how the VET system can be organised to provide*



students with qualifications that enable them to access higher education:

In Romania, training is based on Training Standards and the main principle underlying training in technical and vocational education is based on the acquisition of key skills and competences developed during compulsory education. Learning acquisitions/learning outcomes are both related to academic disciplines and to those strictly related to their professionalization. The ITSET system is structured so that the students can obtain a dual certification, academic and professional, enabling both further study and employment. The students can choose any of the options below:

- Technological high school - leading to qualification 4 in EQF and Baccalaureate diploma, which gives access to higher education,
- 'Choose your path', i.e. 3 years of education and training. They can go to high school to obtain the level 4 qualification certificate and the Baccalaureate diploma, which provides access to higher education. For post high school enrolment, the National Act on Education from 2011 stipulates that all graduates of high schools can enrol in post high school education with or without the Baccalaureate diploma.

For further information: www.itvet.ro

*The 'Lehre mit Matura' from **Austria** is an example of an initiative that enables apprentices to access higher education:*

Permeability between the dual system and higher education is an enduring topic in Austria. In the late 1990s, the so-called 'Berufsreifeprüfung' (examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year full-time VET schools) which can be passed after having completed an apprenticeship had already been introduced and became a success story.

The new initiative 'Lehre mit Matura' builds on the same concept and allows students to prepare for the exam(s) during the apprenticeship training, with the costs covered by the state. The qualification obtained is equivalent to the school-leaving certificate of upper secondary schools as it provides general access to higher education. Around 8% of all apprentices are currently involved in this programme (around 40% of one youth cohort choose the dual system).

See <https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/Service/Bildung-und-Lehre/Lehre/Lehre-und-Matura/Lehre-und-Matura---Themenstartseite.html>

*This example from **Denmark** shows how a higher education programme can be provided which enables students who have completed their studies in agriculture at lower levels to continue their education within VET in the agricultural area:*

In Denmark, agriculture is a core sector supporting an important part of the national economy and labour market respectively. There is high investment in agriculture in Denmark – one of the highest rates in the world – both at a national level and by individual farmers. The investments mainly focus on new technology in attempting to solve issues such as climate change, animal welfare, food safety and food availability. This creates high expectations of education and training in the sector. Denmark has recognised this need and new initiatives are being developed within agricultural education and training, both for vocational education and training at higher qualification



levels. For instance, a new Master degree in agriculture is offered by a university as well as a professional Bachelor degree in agriculture. The programme enables students who have completed their studies in agriculture at lower levels to continue their education within VET in the agricultural area (Cedefop, 2011b p. 61-62). In the Cedefop report the initiative is presented as VET at higher level; however, it is a definitional question whether the programme can be defined as VET when it is a Master degree offered by a university.

*This example from **Finland** shows how permanent systems for validating informal and non-formal learning (prior learning) can be organised:*

The public and voluntary sectors in Finland have had a number of validation initiatives in place for over a decade, and both the private sector and the social partners are integrated into the planning and development work of those initiatives. The implementation of competence-based qualifications, the National Certificate of Language Proficiency and the Computer Driving Licence are prime examples of the ways in which competence and skills acquired outside of formal education systems are recognised in Finland.

The competence-based qualification system (Näyttötutkinto) is the most established form of validation in Finland. Competence-based qualifications can be awarded regardless of how and where the skills and knowledge have been acquired. Knowledge, skills and competences can be demonstrated in officially approved tests. The qualifications came into force in 1994 through the implementation of the Vocational Qualifications Act 306/1994 and are now included in the Act on Vocational Adult Education 1998. The framework was created by the National Board of Education in close co-operation with the main labour market organisations and teachers. For further information:

<http://www.lilama.org/uploads/documents/Validation%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20-%20Finland.pdf>

Principle 12: Improving the image of VET and apprenticeships by promoting excellence

On the one hand, apprenticeships and VET currently do not have the same standing as general education or academic education, and are still often regarded as second-rate education. On the other hand, apprenticeships are frequently highlighted for their inclusive potential for people who have disengaged from education or are unemployed. While the inclusive potential of apprenticeship type schemes is an important element of the youth guarantee initiatives, focusing on early leavers or those risking dropping out may perpetuate the stigma. In many European countries, especially in Southern Europe, apprenticeships do not have a very positive image among the general population. Even countries that are usually associated with quite strong apprenticeship systems, like Austria, Denmark or Germany, face image problems and are confronted with decreasing numbers of young people interested in taking up apprenticeship-type schemes (Cedefop note, 2014). Evidence indicates that low-achieving students are more likely to choose apprenticeship schemes than high achievers (Ramirez & Latina, 2014).



On this basis, the disadvantaged image of apprenticeships and VET call for initiatives that can promote excellence. Promoting excellence means that all stakeholders involved in the provision of VET and apprenticeships (students, schools, teachers, training companies, social partners) should attempt to enhance the professional pride of their trade by doing their best to develop skills of high quality and make them visible to the public, especially to potential learners and their parents.

No shortcut to quality

Improving the image of VET and apprenticeships to attract good students requires that excellence and high professional standards are highlighted, and that schools and companies become ambassadors for educational paths and career opportunities in VET. However, it should be emphasised that it is not enough to promote excellence to improve the 'external' image of VET. Real excellence requires inherent quality in all aspects such as good facilities, good teachers and trainers, good apprenticeships, updated content, etc. Systems must also be in place to ensure quality. There is no shortcut to quality. (These issues are dealt with in more detail in the framework on quality assurance.)

Moreover, attractiveness does not only concern VET programmes and institutions but also the future professions they prepare for. If working conditions and pay have a poor image then this will affect the attractiveness negatively.

Improving the image of apprenticeships and VET by increasing excellence can be done by launching various measures such as those presented below.

Benchmarking of apprenticeships and VET-systems

The results of skill competitions can be used for benchmarking VET systems and apprenticeship schemes; comparing them systematically may produce important insights.

Based on the EuroSkills initiative, several European countries founded ESPO (European Skills Promotion Organisation) in 2007. The competitions have proved to be a great opportunity for countries to benchmark their VET systems (Cedefop info, 2007).

Sharing experiences between VET systems and making good practices visible.

Sharing experiences and good practices between VET providers can be an important approach to the continuous development of VET and apprenticeships to adapt to the needs of learners. For example, the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) is a cluster of ten partner-countries that have exchanged experiences on different themes such as marketing and communication, guidance and counselling and responsiveness to students' needs in order to improve VET systems (ERI SEE, 2012).

Using learners as role models

Using learners and/or people working in the relevant areas as 'ambassadors' or role models can be effective because it combines 'authority' with 'similarity'. Young people may identify with these role models. Local campaigning may make the message even more relevant. In Denmark, for example, young people already engaged in apprenticeships were presented as role models to students in graduating classes.



Highlighting successful VET entrepreneurs as role models

VET not only leads to employment, it can also lead to entrepreneurship and 'being your own boss'. In the present age of individualisation, this may be an attractive option to many young people. Entrepreneurship is included at least to some extent in the national curricula for vocational education in a majority of European countries. Moreover, some countries report that between 90% and 100% of vocational education students participate in entrepreneurship programmes at some point during their vocational education path (European Commission, 2009). In order to improve the attractiveness of VET, successful VET entrepreneurs who have developed their own businesses should be presented as role models to inspire young people.

Apprentice award for companies

Promotion of excellence in apprenticeships does not only concern apprentices but also employers. Awarding employers for providing good apprenticeships can make them serve as 'role models' that inspire other employers to pursue quality in apprenticeship. Furthermore, receiving an award can also be commercially beneficial to employers. The UK has established the National Apprentice Award that recognises apprentices as well as employers (see the UK example below).

In the UK, the National Apprentice Award is an example of an initiative launched to promote excellence among companies that employ apprentices:

The annual National Apprentice Award presents the prestigious Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers list compiled by the National Apprenticeship Service in partnership with City & Guilds. The list recognises exceptional contributions by businesses that employ apprentices. There are currently over 250,000 businesses in the UK running apprenticeship schemes. The National Apprenticeship Service challenges the nation's top apprenticeship employers and apprentices to come forward and show how apprenticeships have made a real difference to them. Now in their eleventh year, the National Apprenticeship Awards are an opportunity to highlight the many success stories and the benefits of apprenticeships. There are six employer categories ranging from small to macro, and two newcomer categories – large and SME. The categories are open to employers of all sectors.

This example from Germany shows how a scholarship can be organised in order to encourage talented VET students to attend further education:

In Germany, the scholarship programme Stiftung für Begabtenförderung (foundation supporting the gifted and talented) for young vocational graduates was established over 20 years ago. Since then, around 96,000 young professionals in Germany have profited from support towards their professional qualifications. Scholarships are available to graduates of dual vocational education and training courses who are younger than 25 years when accepted into a further education programme. To qualify, they have to attain a final apprenticeship examination result of 1.9 ('good') or better, participate successfully in a cross-regional skill competition or be nominated by either an enterprise or their vocational school. Grants of up to EUR 6,000 over three years while attending a further education programme may be paid. See <https://www.sbb-stipendien.de>.

Similarly, in Austria, the Ministry of Economy confers the state prize 'Best training



companies – Fit for future' in the categories of small, medium-sized and large enterprises. The objective of the prize is to improve quality, innovation and sustainability in apprenticeship training and involve more companies in providing apprenticeship. See <http://www.ibw.at/fitforfuture>.

Principle 13: Career guidance to empower young people to make well-founded choices

Career guidance is an important element in relation to improving the attractiveness of apprenticeships. Career guidance which is unbiased and of good quality can reduce the stereotypes and prejudices of apprenticeships among young people and their parents. Good career guidance helps young people make well-informed and sustainable educational choices that match their capabilities. In this way, career guidance can help to ensure that young people complete their education and do not drop out.

Definition of career guidance

Career guidance (or lifelong guidance) can be defined as a continuous process that enables people at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions. Career guidance enables people to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Career guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to giving information, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management (Council of the European Union, 2008).

A similar definition of career guidance developed by OECD (2010) distinguishes between three forms of career guidance:

- Career counselling, conducted on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, in which attention is focused on the distinctive career issues faced by individuals.
- Career education, as part of the curriculum, in which attention is paid to helping groups of individuals to develop the competences for managing their career development.
- Career information, provided in various formats (increasingly web-based), concerned with information on courses, occupations and career paths. This includes labour market information.

Career guidance regarded as a continuous process with three important stages

In the context of this framework, we focus on career guidance as a continuous process, which can start at an early stage in primary school and continue as young people mature and make their choices on educational paths and careers. It is a process which has the following stages:

- Career guidance starting at an early stage in primary school to give pupils a broad view of their possibilities;



- Career guidance that takes place in the risky transition from school to work before young people choose an educational path; and
- Career guidance taking place after young people have entered a programme.

The following sections present some principles and considerations to be taken into account in the organisation and provision of career guidance.

Career guidance with continuity and progression starting in primary school

Career guidance can start at an early stage in primary school and follow young people as they mature and move on to secondary education or work.

Schools are one of the main settings for formal career guidance services. Historically, school-based career guidance services have concentrated on schools at lower secondary level and have targeted young people who are making choices about their educational pathway. Increasingly, guidance services are delivered by the schools themselves together with external partners or by establishing career information centres.

Public employment services (PES) also play an important role in providing career guidance. Across Europe, the role of PES in supporting young people varies greatly. In some countries, formal arrangements exist between PES and schools while in other cases the role played by the PES is less formal (Cedefop, 2010).

Career guidance with an impartial and broad view

In order to support well-informed choices it is important that pupils from an early stage in primary school be introduced to a broad range of educational paths and career opportunities. Career guidance should be impartial, i.e. defined as showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular education or work option. Furthermore, the term impartial also implies that guidance is provided in accordance with the citizen's interests only, i.e. it is not influenced by provider, institutional and funding interests, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, social class, qualifications, ability, etc. (Cedefop, 2005). In other words, guidance should be provided in a way that allows citizens to make their own informed choices so that they become responsible for their own personal, educational and professional decisions.

Impartial guidance can help pupils to discover their own educational and vocational potential if it is provided in an independent manner using external sources of guidance and inspiration. External sources could include employer visits, mentoring, websites, visiting educational institutions and meeting students and teachers, visiting companies and meeting apprentices, etc. Promotion of impartial guidance may require that governments be in a dialogue with education providers and that the social partners develop standards or regulations for defining what impartial guidance is and how it should be provided, starting at an early stage in primary school and following young people when they move on to secondary education. In the UK, the Department of Education has developed statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff. The statutory guidance referred to in the 1997 Education Act defines what impartial guidance is and how it should be provided.



Career guidance that addresses the risky transition from school to work

The transition from school to work is challenging for many young people and poor choices of educational path or career can lead to inactivity and unemployment. Hence, it is crucial that educational and career guidance services are continuously available to young people in the transition from school to work. As young people mature and pass the legal age it is important that they do not 'drop out' and are not 'forgotten' by authorities, and that they know where they can seek guidance and help. In Denmark, for example, the municipal Youth Guidance Centres (UU Centres) are primarily responsible for providing guidance to pupils in forms 7-10 in primary school. However, their target group also includes young people (until the age of 25) who are not in employment (minimum 30 hours a week), or education, or who have not completed an education programme. The UU Centres can be proactive and contact inactive young people.

In order to help young people transition from school to work, it is important to organise guidance and counselling services in a way that ensures continuity and coherence. The organisation of guidance services should be simple, accessible and user-friendly. It is important that young people meet counsellors who know their personal record so that they do not have to be updated repeatedly. A possible solution could be to establish a single point of contact for young people, a 'house of guidance' that links to all relevant authorities and stakeholders. Such a multi-agency, joined-up approach can be introduced by using a one-stop-shop model where all relevant services are housed under one roof.

Timely intervention and career guidance to students during their VET programme

Early school leaving and high rates of students dropping out of VET programmes are persistent challenges in many countries. In 2012, nearly 5.5 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 did not finish any upper secondary education and did not participate in education and training. On average, the unemployment rate of these early school leavers is 40.1%, compared to 23.2% overall youth unemployment in Europe.

Early school leaving (ESL) is a multi-faceted and complex problem caused by personal, social, economic, education or family-related reasons. Due to the complex causes of ESL, comprehensive approaches are required to reduce ESL and this framework does not go into detail about such approaches. In the context of this framework, the key message is that it is important that career guidance be provided before and after young people have entered a VET programme. Career guidance during VET programmes should be organised in a way that enables early detection of VET students who might have problems completing their programme. This is important in order to launch timely supportive initiatives that can help students to complete their programme, or help them find an alternative programme or specialisation that better suits their competences. Career guidance at this stage should ensure that young people are made aware of the different study options and employment prospects available to them. Career guidance should provide young people with both emotional and practical support that meet their need for help (Thematic Working Group on ESL 2013).

Widen access to career guidance with a multi-channel approach

In order to ensure that guidance is made accessible to young people, it can be a good solution to adopt a multi-channel approach that combines personal face-to-face guidance with other modes of delivery via the internet, hotlines, etc. The strength of a



multichannel delivery mechanism is that a combination of different types of services (e.g. online and face-to-face) can complement each other to enable the needs of a diverse clientele to be met. The benefits of internet-based information and guidance services to the users and the service providers are many. For example, access to online services is not limited to office hours. The web-page <http://www.studyinfo.fi> in Finland is an example of how to provide information on various qualifications. However, information and guidance provision should not only rely on digital services (Cedefop, 2011a).

Guidance staff with broad updated insight into the world of work

The low esteem of VET is to some degree the result of guidance that has been biased towards higher education because the guidance staff typically has a general education background. Therefore, it is essential that the guidance staff be properly updated on all educational routes and the labour market. In order to provide balanced and updated career guidance a separate profession of career advisors (OECD, 2011) should be developed to ensure that career advisors have:

- a good knowledge of labour markets, careers and learning opportunities;
- the capacity to identify further relevant sources of information to provide more specific advice;
- the ability to draw out from young people their interests, aptitudes and objectives so as to help them make choices which are both realistic and fulfilling; and
- the competences to help individuals to manage their own careers.

It is also important to develop guidelines that specify the competence requirements of guidance professionals.

Development of professional guidelines to ensure the quality of guidance

The quality of guidance depends on the training and the competences of guidance professionals/counsellors. Hence, professional standards and guidelines should be developed that define the tasks, the roles and the core competences of guidance professionals.

In order to provide effective and coherent guidance addressing the risky transition from school to work, there is a need to have European as well as national guidance policies that manage the whole guidance system and the provision of these services, where all relevant stakeholders should be involved and duly taken into account.

For inspiration, NICE (Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe) has developed a Handbook which describes the main professional roles guidance professionals can have; career counsellor, career educator, career information provider, etc. Core competences are described in relation to each professional role. For example, 'career educators' who are training people to develop career management competences should be competent in:

- teaching people how to become aware of their strengths (interests, values, abilities, competences, talents, etc.);
- using systems and techniques of gathering information on available jobs or vocational and educational training;



- planning, managing, implementing and reviewing their career;
- developing curricula for training programmes;
- planning training sessions;
- facilitating learning in different types of groups and communities; and
- providing people with support to improve their competences for lifelong learning.

Another organisation for counsellors is the European Association for Counselling (EAC), which promotes counselling as a profession working with partner associations throughout Europe.

In this context, it is also relevant to highlight the ELGPN, (European Lifelong Guidance Policies Network), which mainly focuses on Guidance Policies. This network aims to assist the EU Member States and the European Commission, and its main target group are policymakers. ELGPN is developing common European "Guidelines for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems Development" which are expected to be accepted by all Member States. See website <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>

Include career management skills in curriculum

Career management skills can be defined as a range of competences that enable individuals to gather, analyse and organise educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions. In other words, career management skills empower the individual to 'self-management' of his or her choice of educational and career path.

Career management skills can be developed as an integral part of curricula or within guidance activities. The support for career skills development can include job search techniques, professional communication, decision-making and behaviour, CV and application drafting, and behaviour in job interviews. This type of support could also make apprenticeships more attractive to young people who would otherwise consider leaving education and training.

Guidance involving parents

Viewpoints and perceptions of parents and families can have a strong influence on young peoples' choices of education and career. Perceptions of VET and apprenticeships as a second choice can be influenced by parents' preferences, lack of knowledge, stereotyping and prejudices. Moreover, parents can play a vital role in motivating students to remain in education and strive to achieve qualifications.

Consequently, it can be beneficial to involve parents in the guidance process. Parents also benefit from greater involvement in their child's education. Greater involvement allows parents to understand the education system better and can improve their self-confidence in their ability to navigate the process. It can also increase the likelihood that they will pursue lifelong learning opportunities themselves.

Guidance in cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders

Career guidance does not only concern guidance professionals counselling individuals. On the contrary, guidance professionals should also develop cooperation and networks with



a broad range of stakeholders and social systems (organisations, communities, families, employers, employment agencies, social service providers and agencies, education providers, etc.). Based on such networks, guidance professionals can support individuals through activities coordinated with relevant stakeholders.

*The statutory guidance outlines in the **UK** is an example of how to develop guidelines for guidance at the national level in order to ensure that schools provide independent career guidance to all pupils:*

The Department for Education launched statutory guidance in 2014 to be used by governing bodies, school leaders and staff, and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units. The statutory guidance outlines why schools (and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units) must secure independent careers guidance for young people, what they must do to comply with their legal responsibilities in this area, and the role of the governing body and head teacher in shaping the guidance and support offered by the school. It relates to the 'Inspiration Vision Statement' published by the UK government in September 2013 setting out government policy in this area. According to the statutory guidance it is the duty of schools to secure independent careers guidance for all year 8-13 pupils and provide advice and guidance for young people so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential. Schools should help every pupil develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. Inspiring every pupil through more real-life contacts with the world of work can help them understand where different choices can take them in the future. For further information: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302422/Careers Statutory Guidance - 9 April 2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302422/Careers%20Statutory%20Guidance%20-%209%20April%202014.pdf)

*This example shows guidelines for guidance that have been developed at the **European level**:*

At the European level, the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling (NICE) has developed the NICE Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals. NICE is an academic network of 40 higher education institutions in 28 European countries funded with financial support from the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme. For further reading, see http://www.nice-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NICE_Handbook_full_version_online.pdf

*The web page Studyinfo.fi in **Finland** is an example of how an online guidance service can be provided:*

The web page [Studyinfo.fi](#) provides information on different qualifications and on studies in educational institutions in Finland. The service can be used for finding various study options and to apply for enrolment online. The Studyinfo portal is maintained by the Finnish National Board of Education. Studyinfo.fi also provides information on workplaces which are willing to take apprentices. Individuals can also submit their CVs for employers to see. The service helps students and employers to find each other in order to make apprenticeship work.

*This example from **Denmark** shows how tools and good practices of timely intervention and retention of students in VET can be collected and disseminated:*



In Denmark, retention of VET students has been a political issue for many years. In 2005, the Danish Ministry of Education launched a national study of best practices of institutional strategies to enhance retention. This study identified multiple tools and strategies that can support the retention of VET students. The report, "Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark: A best practice study", is available in English here: <http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/>

Principle 14: Enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeships by raising the quality of VET teachers

Whether young people find learning attractive largely depends on their relationship with and the competences of the teaching and training staff. In an apprenticeship, availability of a qualified staff member to supervise the learner is usually one of the quality assurance requirements. Competence requirements for tutors/trainers are part of the criteria against which enterprises are assessed when being accredited as a training company. Not only is the attractiveness of apprenticeships and similar schemes influenced by the quality of learning in the training centre and in the company, but also by the way these two parts are linked and complement each other (Cedefop, 2014b).

Raising the quality of teachers and their cooperation with in-company trainers may have an important role in increasing the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships. The following sections provide ideas and examples for inspiration on how to enhance the quality of teachers and their cooperation with in-company trainers (see also principles 18 and 20).

Ensuring professional development of VET teachers

The development and update of VET teachers' professional and pedagogical skills is important to enhance the attractiveness of apprenticeships and VET. The update of VET teachers should include a broad range of skills and areas.

The general trend from teaching to learning creates a need to change the practices of VET teachers who have traditionally worked alone and concentrated on disseminating knowledge to trainees. Teachers increasingly need to work in teams and they must be able to plan, describe and reflect on their own teaching practices. The teacher-student relationship does not only concern transferring knowledge from the teacher to the students. Instead, teachers increasingly work as facilitators who guide the students in developing their own learning.

Stronger focus on students' individual learning styles calls for more individual guidance of students. Teachers need the ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their students to guide them through VET (Cedefop, 2004 p. 20). Many Member States have requirements concerning formal pedagogical qualifications for VET teachers. For example, Denmark has decided that by 2020 all teachers in VET institutions should have completed a pedagogical diploma programme (ReferNet Denmark, 2015). See <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/denmark-large-skill-boost-vocational-teachers>



Continuous update of vocational skills

Regarding rapid industrial and technological changes, it is essential that VET teachers continuously update their vocational skills and knowledge, incorporating what they learn into their own teaching programmes to ensure trainees leave the VET system with immediately useful skills. In many Member States, on-the-job learning for teachers and trainers is now a standard component in teacher and trainer training, allowing teachers to improve their skills in the areas they are teaching and providing them with direct experience of the world of work. (Cedefop, 2004, p.22)

The key role of VET teachers in establishing and maintaining connections with the workplace

To be a professionally-competent VET teacher today means being familiar with the demands of the world of work and what vocational skills the students should develop in order to meet these demands. Cooperation between schools and enterprises is important to ensure apprenticeships of good quality, and at the same time, it can also serve to improve teachers' knowledge of current work practices and improve trainers' general pedagogical skills and competences. Teachers play a key role in establishing and maintaining connections with the workplace in on-the-job learning. Training should be available to teachers, in which they are encouraged and provided with tools and methods for setting up and maintaining this cooperation. (Cedefop, 2004 p. 24)

Enhancing teachers' capabilities to foster passion and entrepreneurship among students

Attracting and preparing young people for the world of work requires teachers to have coaching competences to foster entrepreneurship and business awareness among students. For example, the E-DECO project, which includes partner organisations from five countries (FI, ES, UK, LT and NL), aims at promoting innovative teaching methodologies and competences of VET teachers by developing their coaching and e-coaching skills in the context of entrepreneurship and business (Adam Europe, 2013).

Increasing the attractiveness of being a VET teacher

The future excellence of apprenticeships and VET depends on the future supply of skilled and motivated VET teachers. As many Member States are facing an ageing teacher population, it is important that policies be launched to make the VET teacher profession attractive and to attract the best-qualified people into the profession (Cedefop, 2004 p. 25).

A recent study indicates that many European countries are facing a lack of qualified people for the teaching profession in general and that initiatives are needed to make the profession more attractive. The study presents recommendations on how to improve the attractiveness and image of the profession. For example, it is recommended that continuing professional development be mandatory and free of charge during the whole of the teacher's career. Salary increases for the most efficient teachers should be encouraged (European Commission, 2013a).



*This example from **Hungary** shows how the update of VET teachers' vocational skills can be organised:*

In 2010, Hungary implemented a project whereby vocational teachers and trainers who have been teaching in VET schools for a long time (around 10 years) have a chance to work for a business organisation or a factory where they can get familiar with the most up-to-date technologies and methods used in their field. In-service training is mandatory for teachers and trainers employed in institutions that come under the Public Education Act. It prescribes a minimum of 120 hours at least once every seven years. The state covers 80% of training costs. Alternatively, higher education studies (such as taking a pedagogical professional examination - pedagógus szakvizsga - in the framework of a postgraduate specialisation programme), and participation in international in-service teacher training programmes (study visits) may also count as fulfilment of this obligation. See http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4103_EN.pdf.

Principle 15: Promoting the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships through a broad range of awareness-raising activities

Improving the attractiveness of VET has been a European policy objective since the beginning of the Copenhagen Process in 2002. The most typical initiatives that have been launched are:

- education and career fairs with a focus on VET;
- skill competition(s);
- campaigns to attract young people to VET;
- campaigns to make adults aware of the benefits of VET; and
- campaigns encouraging enterprises to provide or invest in VET (Source: Cedefop, 2012c p. 19).

In addition to the activities mentioned above, many countries integrate VET elements in compulsory education to support educational choice and familiarise young people. Furthermore, the links between VET institutions and the world of work have been strengthened. Below some of the most typical initiatives are listed:

- VET elements in compulsory education to support educational choice;
- cooperation between compulsory education and VET;
- (Simulated) business experience for learners in compulsory education;
- Work experience / 'tasters' before VET;
- training for teachers in compulsory education to integrate work experience; and
- services organising work experience within compulsory education (Source: Cedefop, 2012c, p. 20).



Many Member States have already organised campaigns for young people. In most cases, they promote VET in general, while France, Austria, Sweden and the UK (England, Wales and Scotland) are among the countries that specifically promote apprenticeships.

In awareness-raising activities aimed at improving IVET attractiveness, the prospective student is a key messenger. Current evidence indicates that the labour market relevance of IVET and the likelihood of finding employment after completing IVET is one of the most important factors influencing perceptions of VET. Therefore, existing campaign and communication efforts often use students and/or people working in the relevant areas as messengers. In Denmark, for example the 'Youth to Youth' initiative applied apprentices as role models (see the Danish example below).

Combating stereotypes and prejudices about VET

The attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships is influenced not only by their own qualities but also by prevailing social and cultural norms. Young people are influenced by their parents who may have out-of-date ideas about IVET that do not reflect, for example, the technological changes in traditional occupations or new occupations in fields such as green energy, media or sports. Improving the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships require also that social and cultural norms be influenced.

A broad range of awareness-raising activities may be required to combat prevailing stereotypes and prejudices about VET and apprenticeships. Here are some examples of awareness-raising activities:

Skill competitions

Evidence from some countries (e.g. Finland, Norway) suggests that skill competitions, which have become increasingly popular, have helped raise enrolment in VET. For instance, learners tend to consider what they observe as being more authentic than presentations at career fairs. Skill competitions therefore can improve the attractiveness and quality of VET by highlighting skills, increasing the participants' interest in a vocational field and developing proficiency in their chosen field. Competitions provide a 'showcase' for skills and are designed to inspire young people to aim for excellence and encourage entrepreneurship. They also aim at providing benefits for employers, training providers and society. Furthermore, they can ease the transition into the labour market, because they provide a meeting point for schools, learners and working life. In order to be effective, skill competitions should not be stand-alone events. Instead, they should be linked to other policies that are part of a broader strategy. In addition to national skill competitions, participation in EuroSkills and WorldSkills also provides opportunities to learn from other skill areas.

Career guidance involving work 'tasters'

It is important that career guidance helps young people make educational choices that are sustainable. A relevant tool can be to let young people try a realistic work situation. In Germany, for example, 'work tasters' have proved effective in easing transition into VET. They have helped learners understand their learning needs.



Job shadowing

Many young people may have stereotyped and preconceived views of the professions and careers they consider pursuing. In order to enable young people to make well-founded decisions, 'job shadowing' may be a viable way to let them experience a realistic work situation (see example from Norway below).

Awareness-raising activities involving all relevant stakeholders

VET is a multifaceted system including a multitude of trades addressing very different target groups and labour markets. Therefore, in order to be effective, awareness-raising activities should be launched and coordinated at both the national and sector levels, involving social partners (see the Finnish example below), trade organisations and education providers. In addition, the Polish example shows how the governmental organisations at the regional level and employers can be involved in developing awareness-raising activities.

*The 'Youth-to-youth' campaign in **Denmark**, is an example of an awareness-raising activity with the aim to make young people consider VET as a possible future choice of career:*

The Secretariat for the Joint Industry Trade Committees (Industriens Uddannelser) launched the 'Youth-to-youth' campaign in 2008. The campaign aimed at engaging those already in apprenticeships as role models, sending them out to visit students in the graduating classes to talk about their own educational choices and daily life as an apprentice in a company and at a vocational school. The aim was to get young people to think of VET as a future choice to a greater extent than they did already. Further information: <http://youthtobusiness.dk/da/>

*The job-shadowing programme from **Norway** is an example of how to organise an initiative that can provide young people with insight into a career path in order to make well-founded choices:*

The job-shadowing programme is aimed at students between the ages of 14 and 15. The programme is divided into three stages. Initially, students shadow a working family member. This enables the student to gain an insight into the career of someone they know, introducing the student to the labour market in a familiar and less intimidating way. Second, the student will shadow someone they do not know to enable them to gain insight into a career they may not have considered while also improving their communication skills. The final stage is for students to shadow an older student who has followed the study route the student is considering. As a whole, these stages may challenge their preconceived view on the jobs they undertook and careers they explored (Cedefop, 2011c). See http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5514_en.pdf.

*The Plan of Actions for Supporting Vocational Education and Training in **Poland** is an example of how to develop an awareness-raising activity with the aim to get young people to think of VET as a possible future choice:*

In Poland, regional education superintendents met with employers from special economic zones and established together the Plan of Actions for Supporting Vocational Education and Training. The plan was being implemented from March until June 2015.



The following actions took place according to the plan: open days at schools and companies; information campaigns for students and parents; visits of students in companies to see the specificity of different occupations; participation of employers in career fairs; conferences and meetings with students of lower-secondary schools; and competitions for students.

*This example from **Finland** shows how the government can organise campaigns to improve the image of VET by providing financial support and letting a sector organisation conduct the operation of the campaign:*

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has provided financial support to the social partners for several campaigns, or the social partners have initiated their own campaigns to improve the image of VET in a particular field or sector (metalwork and machinery, natural and environmental protection, technology, transportation services, and construction and property maintenance services). For example, several campaigns have been carried out in the cleaning service sector, under the direction of the Finnish Cleaning Technical Association (SSTL). The first campaign was Tuunaa Duunis, a pilot project from 2005 to 2007 aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the cleaning sector among young people. The campaign was initiated in response to shortages of students and workers. It was felt that young people had a narrow view of cleaning jobs as only involving hard or dirty work, which did not appeal to them. Consequently, the campaign sought to highlight the variety of jobs, working environments and opportunities for advancement offered by the sector. Typically, the campaigns in particular sectors are designed in the working groups of the national education and training committees (34 field-specific committees), tripartite bodies established to plan and develop VET
(Source: Cedefop ReferNet Finland (2011), VET in Europe: country report Finland.
http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/2011_CR_FI.pdf).

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN WORK-BASED LEARNING

"Conditions for quality assurance of apprenticeships should be agreed upon at all levels ... and clear roles and responsibilities for the various partners as well as the mechanisms for cooperation should be defined."

"...it is crucial that research is systematically used in the VET system and recognised by stakeholders."

"Solid cooperation between all parties involved ... is an essential precondition to achieving high-quality apprenticeships..."

"The purpose of the assessment ... in terms of learning outcomes or expectations has to be clear and transparent for all parties."

"Quality assurance systems should ensure that systematic feedback mechanisms exist between VET schools, apprentices and in-company trainers."





4 Quality assurance in work-based learning

Principle 16: Providing a clear framework for quality assurance of apprenticeship at system, provider and company level ensuring systematic feedback

While it is evident that a legal framework has to be in place to regulate apprenticeship systems, it is less clear to which extent quality assurance explicitly forms part of such a framework. Therefore, this first principle addresses the necessity to appropriately reflect quality assurance in various forms of regulations, such as national legislation, collective agreements or other forms of regulations. It goes without saying that this refers to all levels; it shall fit the national context and is not just about setting the right conditions, but mainly about jointly accepting and respecting these conditions. A particular challenge in this context is to acknowledge the different quality cultures of schools and companies, and to support their endeavours in improving their particular quality culture rather than imposing too prescriptive or detailed frameworks. For business sectors and professional communities this also means recognising their self-organisation abilities and to enabling them to realise quality assurance of apprenticeship training according to their concept of quality.

Addressing quality assurance in national legislation, collective agreements and/or other regulatory settings and fit the national context

Conditions for quality assurance of apprenticeships should be agreed upon at all levels (policy makers, industry, VET providers) and define clear roles and responsibilities for the various partners as well as mechanisms for cooperation. As such, quality assurance also forms part of countries' VET governance framework (see Guidance Framework on Governance and Social Partner Involvement). Quality assurance (which refers to the whole quality cycle and includes planning, implementation and improvement processes) also needs to fit the national culture of quality assurance. In their efforts to ensure quality, some countries may put more emphasis on control and inspection; others may put a stronger focus on self-evaluation.

Establishing quality assurance procedures and ensuring trust and transparency

Quality assurance systems should ensure that systematic feedback mechanisms exist between VET schools, apprentices and in-company trainers. School boards or committees and company representatives must then identify and take appropriate action in schools and/or companies to improve training provision. Particular emphasis should be placed on a coherent system for data collection and analysis and on supporting VET providers, regional and local authorities in their (limited) capacity to use this data. For this purpose particular indicators to monitor quality have been developed at the European level (e.g. completion rate in VET programmes or satisfaction rates of learners; for details see EQAVET Framework) and by several countries. However, when applying quality assurance procedures for VET to apprenticeship-type training schemes, it needs to be checked whether the company-based training is sufficiently addressed. While many quality assurance systems in education focus on the feedback of learners, in apprenticeship systems it is crucial also to use in-company trainers' feedback for the improvement of the system. A quality system for apprenticeship needs to be part of an



overall quality framework for VET, while at the same time being tailored to the particular requirements of company-based learning.

Quality assurance procedures supporting inclusiveness and ensuring equity

Inclusiveness and equity are transversal issues which are also considered important in the other three guidance frameworks (governance, attractiveness, and company support). However, where assessment and certification are concerned these issues become even more crucial insofar as discrimination may become manifest. Therefore, quality assurance procedures shall be checked as to what extent they are sensitive towards inclusiveness and equity. Is the assessment adapted to people with special needs? Do assessors discriminate against certain groups? Are the voice and needs of minorities adequately reflected in the various feedback systems? Are there formal procedures to appeal assessment decisions?

*The 'Qualitätsmanagement Lehre-QML' in **Austria** is an example of how quality management of apprenticeships exams can be organised at the national level:*

The 'Qualitätsmanagement Lehre-QML' systematically monitors apprenticeship exam results. Statistics are provided using the data collected by the apprenticeship offices on drop-out rates, completion of the apprenticeship, share of those who did not take part in the final apprenticeship exam, and positive and negative results of the apprenticeship leave exam. The results are discussed and analysed by the apprenticeship advisory board at the national and regional levels involving sectoral organisations. Measures could result in a reform of the occupational standards, counselling activities, support measures for apprentices, development and provision of educational materials or the improvement of the apprenticeship leave exam (Cedefop, 2015b; REFERNET-Austria/IBW, 2014).

*This example from **Spain** shows how quality assurance of in-company training can be organised at the local level by the VET school/training center and how the main quality parameters can be defined:*

Colegio San José de Calasanz in Spain uses a questionnaire to be completed by company instructors at the end of the in-company training; the college uses it to review the training provision. It includes four parts: 1) assessment of students' transversal competences; 2) organisational aspects (related to the cooperation between VET provider and company); 3) assessment of students' technical competences (including what knowledge or professional competences, software, equipment etc., should be strengthened in the technical training of students in order to prepare them better for the in-company training); and 4) overall assessment by the company ('pass'/'fail'). In addition, observations can be included such as suggestions on new/emerging competence requirements that should be addressed in the training process at school (Cedefop, Forthcoming-b).

*The Swedish Schools Inspectorate in **Sweden** is an example of how the quality assurance of VET schools can be organised at the national level and operated by a central, public authority:*

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducts regular inspections of compulsory and upper secondary level schools. In addition to the regular inspections, the Inspectorate also



conducts quality audits that focus on well-defined areas of interest, targeting a sample of 30-40 schools within each project. In accordance with a government remit from 2012, the agency has improved its capacity to supervise work-based learning (WBL). Three quality audit projects have been reported in recent years. For example, the report 'Workplace-based education: in practice' from 2011 provided evidence that the vocational programs had to improve their efforts to inform and prepare the WBL tutors for their duties while preparing students for what the WBL includes and what the goals for the education are (ET2020 VET Group representative for Sweden; see also www.skolinspektionen.se).

*Peer Review service in **Austria** is an example of how procedures for quality assessment and development can be organised:*

The Peer Review service for the VET school sector is provided by the Austrian VET Quality Initiative (QIBB) to support quality development at the school location. The main feature of the peer review process is that a team of external experts (peers) is invited to evaluate the quality areas that have been specified by the school. When the peer review process is completed, the school receives oral feedback and a written report from the peers. The decision to implement a peer review is made by the school management and is voluntary (for details see <https://www.qibb.at/de/English>).

*This example from **Portugal** shows how the organisation of a quality assurance system can be enacted by a legal framework:*

Decree-Law no 92/2014, of 20th June, establishes that vocational schools should implement quality assurance systems in line with the EQAVET framework of the training processes and the results obtained by the students. Although the scope of the new decree is restricted to vocational schools, the implementation of quality assurance systems is strategic for all VET providers in the context of continuous improvement of the training processes and the results obtained by the students/trainees. In this context, the process of quality assurance implementation should gradually cover all VET providers. The ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training) is the institution with competence in promoting, monitoring and supporting the implementation of quality assurance systems in VET training processes. The institution has an ongoing project under which vocational schools should 1) adopt a quality assurance model in line with the EQAVET Framework or adjust their model to the EQAVET Framework (until the end of 2015); and 2) implement a quality assurance system in line with the EQAVET Framework (by the end of 2016). (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Portugal, see also <http://www.qualidade.anqep.gov.pt>)

Principle 17: Ensuring the content of VET programmes is responsive to changing skill needs in companies and the society

A central topic in governance is how systems or institutions react to and accommodate change. On the one hand this could refer to the responsiveness of VET to the labour



market or the society in general in terms of incremental change, e.g. by renewing occupational standards and curricula. On the other hand, it could refer to the openness for change of the system in general, in terms of institutional reforms. Reasons for change can have external origins (e.g. high youth unemployment) or come from within the system (i.e. the need for better permeability). An understanding and deliberate management of change presupposes both a continuous monitoring of the VET systems and learning from evaluation of initiated changes. Hence, it is crucial that research is systematically used in the VET system and recognised by stakeholders. Such a systematic, evidence-based VET policy approach may imply the following:

- the development of new educational or occupational standards are evidence based;
- VET reforms are evaluated;
- there are regular forecasts on the development of apprentices, apprenticeship places and skills needs; and
- there is regular monitoring and reporting on outcomes (e.g. number of apprenticeships completed, transition rates, employment, etc.).

It is important to mention that in any such evaluation the voice of the learner needs to be reflected. Thus, when talking about responsiveness, it is not just about responsiveness to labour market needs and how graduates enter the labour market, but also to the needs of the learners and society in general.

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

A regular monitoring of the apprenticeship market (applicants and apprenticeship places) is an important element for timely interventions when needed. This could also include short-term forecasts of supply and demand for apprenticeship places. Major changes or reforms in the systems should be subject to evaluations; newly planned changes should be subject to feasibility studies and impact assessments. For example, some regions in Spain recently implemented different pilot projects for dual vocational training, which would be worth evaluating with the aim to initiate a review of the current regulation (Cedefop, Forthcoming-a).

Regular anticipation of skill needs and labour market trends

Anticipation of skill needs may be another important way of enhancing labour market responsiveness. Many countries in Europe have designed systems for forecasting or anticipating skill needs. Also at the European level, new instruments are being developed (see for example Cedefop's activities regarding the European Skills Panorama). However, the national systems for economic and skills forecasts are often not sufficiently linked with the planning of VET provisions and thus do not deliver the necessary input for the design of VET content. Countries with existing skill forecasts need to better align these activities with stakeholders involved in the design of VET curricula and standards. Countries which are in the process of developing skills forecasting systems should take the needs of these stakeholders into account.

Since vocational programmes take some years to complete, there is a time lag between the decisions on the training programme and the time that VET graduates enter the labour market. Due to the complexity of predicting the labour market, quantitative skill



forecasts always include some uncertainties. Therefore, quantitative forecasts need to be supplemented with qualitative assessments, e.g. by involving companies in commenting on expected qualitative changes of occupational profiles.

Building a strong VET research community

VET research can be organised as concomitant research supporting system changes and pilot projects; anticipatory VET research can also identify needs for policy action. Thus, a strong VET research infrastructure (either a national research institute, strong academic research, or non-university research) can enable the innovativeness of apprenticeship systems and safeguard its proper functioning. However, VET research has to become a basis for the dialogue between policy and practice. The recently established bi-annual VET research conferences in Switzerland or Austria are examples for such an initiative.

*The Central Analysis and Prognosis initiative (CAP) in **Denmark** is an example of how the government can organise systematic procedures for updating the skills needs of the labour market:*

Since 2009, CAP has financed a series of research projects, aiming at studying important tendencies, which might be neglected by the trade committees otherwise determining Danish VET. CAP primarily aims at producing evidence for the need of establishing new VET programmes and the adjustment of existing programmes. Each year CAP launches analyses commissioned by the National Council for Vocational Training, which defines a few overriding themes cutting across the interests of specific trade committees (<http://www.uvm.dk>).

*The France Stratégie in **France** is an example of how the assessment of the demand for VET can be organised at the national and regional levels. At the national level, the government agency France Stratégie has the responsibility for the assessments of the demand for VET while observatories at the regional level monitor the need for vocational training:*

France Stratégie is located in the Office of the Prime Minister and produces regular authoritative reports that are used to inform policy at the national and regional levels on trends in the economy and labour market. Regionally, there are observatories for jobs and training. An example is Observatoire Régional de l'Emploi et Formation (OREF), the regional monitoring institute on employment and vocational training. OREF collects and analyses data on skills and the labour market, especially data relating to regional trades and regional qualifications. At sectoral level, the institute for monitoring future trends in occupations and qualifications (Observatoire Prospectif des Métiers et des Qualifications, OPMQ) provides skills trends analysis on the labour market, which is then used to suggest changes in the supply of skills and qualifications (Cedefop. 2013). For further information: <http://blog.en.strategie.gouv.fr/>

Portugal has developed a system which exemplifies how the anticipation of skills can be organised:

ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training) has implemented a system for the anticipation of skills needs called SANQ - Sistema de Antecipação de Necessidades de Qualificações. SANQ's objectives are to assess how the dynamics of the economy and the labour market influence the demand for skills in the



short and medium term perspective, and to anticipate that demand in the updating of the National Catalogue of Qualifications. SANQ also sets priority levels for qualifications within the National Qualifications System (NQS) and diagnoses skills needs at regional level, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders (Sector Councils for Qualification, Intermunicipal Communities, Centres for Qualification and Vocational Education) (ET2020 VET Group representative for Portugal). <http://sanq.anqep.gov.pt/>

Principle 18: Fostering mutual trust and respect through regular cooperation between the apprenticeship partners

The existence of legal requirements and formal arrangements alone cannot guarantee quality in work-based learning. Quality assurance is also inextricably linked to the issue of trust, and trust can only develop when all parties are acquainted with one another. This presupposes both mutual interest and an understanding of assessment and quality assurance as a joint effort of all apprenticeship partners. Solid cooperation between all parties involved (ministries, qualification authorities, awarding bodies, VET schools or training centres, social partners' organisations, sectoral or branch organisations, chambers of commerce, professional bodies and companies) is an essential precondition to achieving high-quality apprenticeships and on-the-job-training in companies. Only a structured communication between VET schools and companies, which takes individual learners' needs as a starting point, can assure a strong coherence between the two learning venues. In addition to cooperation between the various apprenticeship partners, mutual engagement in quality assurance and assessment procedures is a key; so to is the idea of mutually supporting each other through regular constructive feedback.

Quality assurance and assessment as a joint effort and mutual engagement of all apprenticeship partners

Cooperative involvement of apprenticeship partners in quality assurance may take place on various levels and across levels. At the local level, this may mean that final examinations of apprentices are jointly conducted by in-company trainers, teachers and representatives of the professional community to ensure consistency between school and company training. At the national level, it may refer to the dialogue among the involved public authorities (such as ministries of education, employment, economy, or finance), the National Reference Point for EQAVET, and social partners or the inclusion of social partners in the steering of national or regional agencies for quality assurance (this system level is addressed in the Guidance Framework on Governance). Peer review, broadly defined as 'external evaluation by critical friends', may be an appropriate means to foster trust. In-company trainers and employers can either be formally included in peer reviews of VET providers or be informally invited to regular site visits. VET providers and teachers can assess company-based learning activities by visiting learners in the company on a regular basis, or by being included in accreditation procedures for training companies.



Community building and networking among teachers and trainers

While teachers usually have common educational and professional backgrounds and find opportunities to meet and coordinate their interests, in-company trainers share fewer commonalities, are less likely to meet, and belong to different professional communities. Bringing in-company trainers together by encouraging them to actively participate in a network of peers and thus developing a 'learning community of in-company trainers' could create a great deal of added value for the quality of apprenticeships. Work placements in companies/schools and job shadowing could be instruments for improving pedagogical and curricula knowledge of trainers and for updating the technical skills of teachers (e.g. new technical equipment in companies). This could also lead to a more structured co-operation between trainers and teachers and mutual engagement in the further education and training of one another.

*This example from **Sweden** shows how the government can promote work-based learning in the form of apprenticeship by strengthening VET providers' capacity to support SMEs to develop quality work-based learning:*

Apprenticeship training was introduced in 2008 in Sweden. Evaluations have shown that companies would like to have more support from the schools regarding content, planning, and all kinds of issues related to the challenge of introducing young people to the workplace. This kind of support is usually given by VET teachers from the school responsible for the apprentice. However, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has realized that the contacts between schools and workplace are sometimes insufficient. The agency has learned that apprenticeship training seems to enjoy greater success when the schools are committed and have developed a plan or strategy for WBL. In order to support schools to create such plans and strategies, in 2013 the National Agency for Education started a training programme for VET teachers to become WBL developers. After completion of the training, the teachers may become national WBL-developer and as such support the VET providers (schools) in their strategic work on quality development of WBL. This may include collaboration between VET providers and workplaces, quality assurance of workplaces and assessment of students' work-based learning (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Sweden).

*This example from **Finland** shows how procedures for the update of teachers' vocational competences and knowledge can be organised:*

Teachers have work placements in companies to update their knowledge. During such placements the teachers are also encouraged to train the trainers on the latest developments in education and pedagogical aspects of in-company training. The National Board of Education also supports the training programme for workplace instructors as part of the government's strategy to promote work-based learning and skill demonstrations. Training of workplace instructors is the responsibility of VET providers. The content of training is developed at the national level and transmitted to providers in the form of guides and guidelines; they are not mandatory, but all providers use them to ensure the quality and consistency of training. For further information: 'Guide on implementing workplace instructor training'; 'Competence map for workplace instructors'; 'Guide for implementation of vocational teachers' work placement periods' (Cedefop, 2014a).

*In this example from **Austria**, the IVET 'trainer colleges' or 'trainer academies'*



(*Ausbilderakademien*) coordinate support for the continuing training and professionalisation of apprenticeship trainers in companies and for cooperation among trainers to improve quality:

IVET trainer colleges are established as regional institutions aiming to meet the needs of trainers and companies. Their common goal is the continuing training and professionalisation of IVET trainers and consequently the quality assurance of dual training. The IVET trainer college itself is not a physical training institution but rather a network devoted to structuring and promoting the continuing training of apprenticeship trainers. Attendance at the offered training seminars is voluntary. IVET trainer colleges have been set up in five Austrian provinces. IVET trainer colleges are mostly initiated by the regional economic chamber in cooperation with the Economic Promotion Institute (WIFI) (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative of Eurochambres).

*This example from **Germany** shows how the design and assessment of qualifications can be organised in a combined top-down and bottom-up system involving the social partners:*

Core players are the sectorial social partners (employers and employees) and the schools (teachers). Qualifications are designed by experts from the social partners together with the Federal Ministry of Education and the Federal Institute for Vocational education (BIBB) to meet the needs of the workplace. In addition, experts from schools design the theoretical curriculum for the VET schools. These requirements are recognised nationwide and the local chambers guarantee that the apprentices are qualified in accordance with the requirements. The final exams are written nationwide on the same day. The questions and tasks are developed by the chambers of each respective occupation; the chambers are the certifying body. The examination board consists of equal numbers of qualified employers, employees and teachers, who themselves have not been involved in the training of the apprentice. It thus becomes immediately obvious when final results do not fulfil the requirements of the curriculum, or when the curriculum is no longer in line with the requirements of the workplace. The chambers as certifying bodies are independent organizations; they guarantee that the training and assessment follows the set standards and that the trainers in the workplaces are qualified (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Germany, see also <http://www.bibb.de>).

Principle 19: Ensuring fair, valid, and authentic assessment of learning outcomes

General principles of assessment, such as a clear purpose, validity and reliability, must be applied to classroom learning as well as to work-based learning. The purpose of the assessment and what is to be assessed in terms of learning outcomes or expectations has to be clear and transparent for all parties. The best method for conducting the assessment needs to be selected, and it must be considered how to best communicate the assessment results to the learners and how to involve learners in the assessment



process. However, for work-based learning and apprenticeship in particular two additional aspects need to be emphasized. First, the different learning environments call for an assessment which on the one hand addresses specificities of these different settings while on the other hand guaranteeing the same standards for all. This is particularly difficult for the company-based part of training which is obviously more diverse than the school part. In a school context it is easier to provide standardized conditions, whereas conditions for trainings and assessment in company-based training can vary both because of the different occupations and the differences between companies (e.g. the standards they comply with on the shop-floor level). Second, there is the issue of authenticity, to the extent that the assessment should be as realistic and close to the real working process as possible. Balancing fairness and impartiality with authenticity is a major challenge for assessment of work-based learning.

Different learning environments using learning outcome as a common reference point

Learning outcomes of the qualification or programme should be used as a common reference point for apprenticeship certification and exams should be conducted in cooperation with external assessors to guarantee impartiality. This would ensure that the examination is independent of different learning environments and that the same standards are applied to all learners undertaking the same qualification. This should help the company-based part of the apprenticeship training to be recognised nationwide, which might be an issue for federally-organised countries.

Ensure validity, reliability and impartiality of the assessment

Clear regulations and guidelines about what is to be assessed are a key element to ensure the reliability of an apprentice/learner assessment. For example, it needs to be clear that it is not learners' personality which is being assessed. Impartiality, validity, and reliability of the results can be increased by various means. External assessors can vary combination of the assessment methods. Technology-based competency assessment can be used; for example, in the case of tests using car or train simulators, virtual patients and the like. This should not undermine the fact that the assessment of apprentices is essentially the task of teachers and trainers who should work together (see principle 18) to define the best methodology for the assessment. As pointed out above, a good way to ensure impartial assessment would be an examination board consisting of teachers, trainers and representatives of companies not involved in the training of the apprentice ('Those who teach/train, don't assess').

Ensure assessment in business or business-like contexts

Using a multiplicity of methods is another common quality principle of assessment. For work-based learning, a great variety of different assessment options exist including project or case studies and their presentation, simulations or skills demonstrations. A particular requirement of work-based learning is that the assessment shall be as authentic or realistic as possible to be able to evaluate whether the apprentice/learner has acquired the knowledge, skills and competences for the particular occupation. Consequently, assessments, in particular certifying examinations, shall take place in real working environments at companies, or simulated environments as the second best choice.



Balanced assessment approaches

Though the final examination in apprenticeship often deserves the most attention, other forms of assessment should not be neglected. Constant monitoring and feedback of apprentices' performance and communication jointly carried out by teachers and in-company trainers is equally important to provide timely interventions when problems crop up before the certification process. Thus, a balanced combination of summative, formative and interim assessment as well as external and self-assessment is recommended. This is also underlined in a forthcoming Cedefop report which, based on research in 12 European countries, provides evidence that the combination of different assessment methods and procedures are of particular importance for ensuring quality and relevance of certification processes (Cedefop, Forthcoming-b).

Well-defined and clear processes for all parties

In addition to impartiality of the actual assessment, transparency of the assessment procedures need to be ensured. There needs to be a clear schedule for the assessments and apprentices should be well-informed about the assessment methods, procedures and criteria. This also applies to all other parties involved in the assessment, in particular to external assessors or employers, who may lack the time to prepare themselves well for the assessment.

Qualifications and training of assessors

The qualification and training of assessors is an important aspect to ensure the quality of assessment. This could be done by defining minimum relevant qualifications and professional experience for experts to be qualified to act as chair or member of the examination boards. Additionally, short preparatory courses for experts who may have the relevant technical expertise, but lack experience in chairing examination boards or conducting assessments of apprentices, could be provided.

In Hungary, for example, only experts with relevant qualifications and professional experience can act as chairs and be members of the examination committees. They must apply to be listed in a national register, the selection criteria of which are very strict and defined by law (Cedefop, 2015a).

*ROC Tilburg in **the Netherlands** is an example of how assessment in VET at the upper secondary level can be organised in a real, authentic business context:*

At the beginning of the school year, each student is linked to a 'learning company' that develops a unique and realistic/authentic examination project, based on a real activity of the learning company (in their final year, students take part in three of four of these assessment projects as they are in professional practice 'full time'). The examination project is approved (by the student, trainer at school and workplace trainer) and ascertained (by the school 'ascertainer'). After that, the student goes ahead with the examination project for approximately six weeks. During this time, the student is seen as a part of the company's project team like a 'regular' employee. At the end of the



assignment, the student plans the assessment at the learning company. A report and a presentation are part of the products that are assessed and through which the student has to show mastery of the learning outcomes. Assessment and grading are done by a minimum of two people: the trainer at school and the workplace trainer. Assuring the quality of the system with unique examination projects means lots of time and work for examination officials and teacher teams and requires investment by local companies. It is a more complex way of certification; however, it conforms to the core of the school's educational vision (Cedefop, Forthcoming-b).

*Similarly, the 'performance assessment' in **Portugal** is an example of how an assessment taking place in a real, business-like context can be organised:*

In all types of VET in Portugal, the most effective way to assess directly and authentically what learners know and can do is via the performance assessment. This approach to assessment is authentic because it enables learners to experience realistic theme-based situations that require integrating knowledge and skills from several disciplines. This way, the learner's mastery is demonstrated in a practical 'real life' context rather than inferred from his/her responses on a written test. This type of assessment includes project development, namely for the final practical exam, and performance tasks (either in an enterprise/company or workplace simulations) (Source: Cedefop Forthcoming-b).

*The 'LAP-Clearingstelle' in **Austria** shows how the quality assurance of the apprenticeship exam can be organised in order to ensure consistent and transparent assessment nationwide:*

The role of LAP-Clearingstelle is to support apprenticeship offices and ensure nationwide standards of final apprenticeship examinations. The 'LAP-Clearingstelle' approves exam questions according to their relevance in relation to day-to-day practice and their suitability for verifying the knowledge and skills necessary for performing a specific occupation. The 'Clearingstelle' project will receive funding from the Austrian government until 2017 and aims to provide at least one example of exam questions and examination guidelines for each occupation by 2015 (Cedefop, Forthcoming-b).

*The 'Elevplan' in **Denmark** is an example of how to organise systematic procedures for monitoring and assessing the learners' development of competences during VET and apprenticeship:*

At the beginning of the course, competence goals and the regulations from the directives are presented and made available on the students' learning platform 'Elevplan' ('student plan'). This platform is maintained by the Ministry of Education and is made available to all students on the providers' web pages. The platform includes all formal rules and regulations related to the qualification studied. 'Elevplan' is also used to inform students about results of tests and course progress. In addition, students are given access to the competence goals and learning outcomes they are expected to achieve during the training course. Information is provided in different ways both at the beginning and during the training course. The most comprehensive information is given prior to the final tests and exams. Close to the date of the final examination, students are informed again about the regulations and also about what the other students have done during their final projects. Finally, assessors are provided with detailed information well in



advance of the examinations. For example, they receive a package with both the projects the students have finalised and all the formal documents including the directive, the goals and the examination plan with the assessment criteria. Therefore, assessors receive a good overview of what is expected from them and become familiar with the student projects. Before the examination, assessors and teachers meet to agree on how the examination will be carried out. The assessor is reminded about the assessment criteria (Cedefop, Forthcoming-b).

*Similarly to the Danish example, this example from **Finland** shows how procedures for assessing the apprenticeships can be organised:*

An apprenticeship includes an individual study programme, drawn up on the basis of the qualification requirements set out by the Finnish national Board of Education. During the apprenticeship, continuous learning assessment is carried out at the workplace. An assessment discussion takes place usually three times a year in accordance with the instructions issued by the apprenticeship training organiser. An apprentice must have an appointed workplace trainer responsible for his or her instruction. The assessment discussion takes place between the student and workplace trainer, who also gives feedback from other staff participating in the instruction. Apprentices also assess their own skills. At the end of apprenticeship training, the employer and the workplace trainer provide the student with final assessment of vocational competence. Each module is assessed. Competence tests take place in authentic working life settings. Competence tests are assessed by the representatives of the employer, employees and the organiser of the competence-based qualification. When candidates have demonstrated that they can meet the vocational skills requirements, they are awarded a qualification certificate by the relevant Qualification Committee. The Qualification Committee is tripartite independent committee which ensures that the competence meets the working life needs (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Finland).

Principle 20: Supporting the continuous professional development of in-company trainers and improving their working conditions

Despite the importance of in-company trainers, a Cedefop study based on case studies in 13 countries found that 'the trainer position tends to lack recognition within companies and therefore opportunities for professional development remain insufficient. Current policies do little to support in-company trainers in this area, in particular, for skilled workers providing training on a part-time basis' (Cedefop, 2010). According to a previous study (Institut Technik und Bildung, 2008), the main reason for in-company trainers not engaging in continuing learning is a lack of incentives (financial incentives, improved career prospects, higher professional status), followed by inadequate support by employers and scarce training offers. To address this challenge the European Commission and Cedefop jointly produced with the support of the Members States 'Guiding principles on professional development of trainers in VET' (Cedefop, 2014c; Cedefop, 2014a). Naturally, there is some overlap with the principles below, although the



principles presented here have been drafted with a focus on apprenticeship trainers and their role for quality assurance in mind.

Assure national recognition of trainer qualifications

While regulations exist in all countries for the qualification and training of teachers, only a few European countries require national recognition of a qualification for in-company apprentice trainers. The ways of certifying their competences are also rather diverse. A national board to oversee recognition and quality of training for trainers may be an appropriate means; in other contexts that may be the task of regional or local authorities or chambers. Providing options for recognition of trainers' prior learning is another possibility which could be considered. Finally, the specific context of small enterprises must not be neglected when discussing national recognition of trainer qualifications. A forthcoming study on in-company (CVET) trainers in SMEs (Cedefop, Forthcoming-c) found the establishment of an officially regulated profession of in-company trainer to be the least suitable option of a number of pre-defined public support measures. While in big companies apprenticeship trainers may be a full-time job and a profession in itself, in SMEs this is usually only an additional qualification.

Increase training opportunities for trainers

A high degree of regulation and very demanding access requirements risks discouraging skilled workers from becoming in-company trainers and subsequently prevent a company from becoming a training company offering apprenticeship places. Training provisions for trainers have no such drawbacks and are therefore probably the most efficient way to raise the quality of company-based learning. Quality assurance of training and assessment processes should be a fixed component in 'train the trainer' curricula. The training of trainers should preferably take place at accredited institutions (officially accredited training providers, chambers of commerce, etc.). Finally, the exchange and cooperation between teachers and trainers should be taken into account both in the design and provision of the training of trainers.

Create a supportive working environment and better working conditions for trainers

The lack of incentives seems to be a major reason for skilled workers not becoming in-company trainers or engaging in further training. While it is easy to call for better working conditions and higher salaries or bonuses for trainers to make their jobs more attractive, it is hard to put that into practice. However, there are a number of little things, which do not cost that much and which support the work of trainers; for example, more flexible training schemes, better access to teaching and training materials, etc. More challenging is to convince managers to recognize the importance of trainers' job and function and to development an expansive training culture within enterprises (in terms of becoming learning organisations). In expansive training cultures training is seen as an investment and the value of trainers and the need to support their competence development is acknowledged. That is why measures also need to be aimed at the company to raise awareness for the importance of training (see also Guidance Framework on support for companies). For example, combining funding for training with funding for innovation and business development may be more appealing to company managers than co-funding training as an end in itself.



Acknowledge the wider learning environment of apprentices within the company

The focus on supporting in-company trainers should not undermine the role of other staff members in apprentice learning. Quite often the 'official' in-company trainer (e.g. in Germany the one who holds the instructor aptitude certificate, AEVO) is not the person instructing the apprentice. Other skilled workers, special mentors, and older apprentices also partly act as instructors and provide the social environment in which the apprentice learns. Thus, on the one hand, there is an issue of making sure that the ones who train are also qualified as trainers (each apprentice shall have one official recognised trainer who is responsible for him/her); on the other hand, one needs to make sure that other staff members also contribute to a supportive learning environment. This could be realised by encouraging enterprises to include training principles in official notices or their mission statements which apprentices can refer to in case of conflict, or by simply instructing co-workers in some basic pedagogical principles.

*This example from **Luxembourg** shows how to develop a legal framework that engages companies in providing the in-company trainers with appropriate skills for mentoring apprentices:*

According to the national legislation regarding initial vocation education and training, each company engaged in apprenticeship has to designate, depending on the number of trained apprentices, one or more internal tutors who are in charge of the supervision and mentoring of the apprentices employed by this company. In a quality assurance approach, the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce is the initiator and exclusive provider of a compulsory training programme addressed to the tutors, called "Train the Tutors". The programme aims to provide tutors with a high-level didactical and pedagogical skills set in order to ensure an appropriate supervision of trainees. This especially refers to their integration in the team and their daily assistance as well as the definition and organisation of their respective practical training programmes (ET2020 VET Group representative of Eurochambres, see also <http://tuteurs.lsc.lu/>).

*Similarly, the legislation in **Germany** is an example of how to define what qualifications the responsible in-company trainer should have:*

In Germany, in-company trainers require the necessary vocational qualification and educational qualification according to the Ordinance (regulation) on trainer aptitude (AEVO), which is acquired through an examination. A company is eligible to provide workplace training if at least one person holds an AEVO qualification. Regional chambers offer training programmes to help candidates to prepare for the exams. Chambers also provide training to trainers in SMEs. In 2012, approximately 62,000 trainers passed the AEVO exams. Around 334,000 instructors working in companies were recently actively involved in training matters (Cedefop, 2014a).

*This example from **Sweden** shows how training for in-company trainers can be provided online:*

In 2014, the National Agency for Education launched web-based training for workplace trainers or tutors. The training, which is free of charge, includes the equivalent of two days of education encompassing four introductory general modules and a supplementary module that specifically addresses apprenticeship education. This web-based training



has been developed recognizing the situation and challenges SMEs may encounter. The training is therefore modular and may be followed online in a flexible way whenever and wherever it suits the trainer. It has been developed for a wide range of devices including smartphones and tablet computers. Each module deals with a specific area and contains small scenes with interactive exercises including films and sketch-notes. The web-based training allows trainers to comment and share experiences with other trainers in the same vocational area. The modules may also be offered in a blended way, combining e-learning with workshops or seminars (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative for Sweden, see also: <http://aplhandledare.skolverket.se>).

*This example from **Spain** shows how the training of in-company trainers can be organised at the national level by the government:*

The Ministry for Education together with the Chamber of Commerce is currently developing a training course for Business Tutors for Dual VET, specially designed for SMEs. Once the design of the offline and online didactic training material is finished, the courses for tutors will be given to SMEs at local Chambers of Commerce. The training material includes information on, for example, the role of the tutor in the companies, methods and didactic techniques, methods for conflict resolution and the evaluation of learning outcomes. The guide is addressed to professionals who are to become tutors of apprentices, with a special focus on future tutors in SMEs. They also produced a guide presenting in a simple way the implementation of an alternative training model focused on the improvement of dual VET in Spain. The guide is conceived as a starting reference point for those people interested in approaching and increasing their knowledge of dual VET. The objective is to give an instructive approach, providing the necessary data for understanding the philosophy of this training system and its basic implementation tools: to show the means of access, the paths to follow and the advantages of its implementation. The guide is a document of 52 pages, presenting dual VET in Spain step by step, and defining the role of each stakeholder and the methodology of dual VET (Source: ET2020 VET Group representative of Eurochambres).



Abbreviations

Business Europe	Confederation of European Business
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EAfA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
ET 2020	Education and Training 2020
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	Early school leaving
ESPO	European Skills Promotion Organisation
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU 2020	Europe 2020 growth strategy
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
NEETs	Young people who are "Not in Education, Employment, or Training"
NICE	Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PES	Public Employment Services
PET	Professional education training
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UEAPME	European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning
WG	Working Group



Glossary

Work-based learning (WBL)	Work-based learning (WBL), a key aspect of VET, is directly linked to its goal of helping learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences with direct relevance for the labour market.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships formally combine and alternate company-based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with school-based education (periods of theoretical/practical education delivered in a school or training centre), and lead to nationally recognised qualification upon successful completion. Most often there is a contractual relationship between the employer and the apprentice, with the apprentice being paid for his/her work.
Apprenticeship partners	Refers to all parties involved in the apprenticeship systems: VET providers, employers, apprentices, employers' associations, trade unions, the government, student unions, etc. The three main partners are VET providers, employers, and apprentices.
Social partners	Employers' associations and trade unions forming the two sides of social dialogue (Cedefop, 2008, p. 170).
VET Teachers	A teacher is a person whose function is to impart knowledge, know-how or skills to learners in an education or training institution. A VET teacher is a person who works in education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market.
Trainers/in-company trainers	Trainer: Anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the theoretical or practical training function, either in an institution for education or training, or in the workplace. In-company trainers are understood as those trainers fulfilling their training functions in the workplace.
Tutors	Any person offering a learner guidance, counselling or supervision by an experienced and competent professional.
Mentors	Any experienced person who provides guidance and support in a variety of ways and acts as a role model, guide, tutor, coach or confidante for a young person or novice (i.e. someone joining a new learning community or organisation).
VET providers	Any organisation or individual providing education or training services.

The glossary does not provide definitions but is considered to be a tool for the better understanding of the reader.



References

- Adam Europe. 2013. 'Developing teachers' skills on coaching, e-environments and entrepreneurship (E-DECO)'. http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/11560/project_11560_en.pdf
- Alizavova, N. 2013. 'Role of Apprenticeships in Combating Youth Unemployment in Europe and the United States'. Peterson Institute for International Economics, Policy Brief 2013. <http://www.iie.com/publications/pb/pb13-20.pdf> page 9
- Business Europe. 2012. 'Creating Opportunities for Youth: How to improve the Quality and Image of Apprenticeship'.
<https://www.businesseurope.eu/sites/buseur/files/media/imported/2012-00330-E.pdf>.
- Cedefop. 2005. 'Improving lifelong guidance policies and systems. Using common European reference tools'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4045>.
- Cedefop. 2008. 'Terminology of European education and training policy – A selection of 100 key terms'. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4064>.
- Cedefop. 2009. 'VET in Europe – Country Report. Estonia'.
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/estonia-vet-europe-country-report-2009>.
- Cedefop. 2010. 'Professional development opportunities for in-company trainers: A compilation of good practices'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/6106>.
- Cedefop. 2011a. Working Paper 11 'Lifelong guidance across Europe: reviewing policy progress and future prospects'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/6111>.
- Cedefop. 2011b. Research paper No 15: 'Vocational education and training at higher qualification levels'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5515>.
- Cedefop. 2011c. Research paper No 14: 'Guidance supporting Europe's aspiring entrepreneurs. Policy and practice to harness future potential'.
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5514>.
- Cedefop. 2012a. 'Vocational education and training in Denmark Short description' Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012.
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4112>.
- Cedefop. 2012b. Briefing note November 2012: 'Permeable education and training systems: reducing barriers and increasing opportunity'.
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/9072>.



Cedefop. 2012c. 'Trends in VET policy in Europe 2010-12. Progress towards the Bruges communiqué'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/6116>.

Cedefop. 2013. 'Renewing VET provision – Understanding feedback mechanisms between initial VET and the labour market'. Research Paper No 37. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5537>.

Cedefop. 2014a. 'Guiding principles on professional development of trainers in vocational education and training'.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/TWG_Guiding_principles_on_professional_development_of_trainers_in_VET_FINAL.pdf.

Cedefop. 2014b. Research paper No 39: 'Attractiveness of initial vocational education and training: identifying what matters'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5539>

Cedefop. 2014c. 'EU, be proud of your trainers: supporting those who train for improving skills, employment and competitiveness. Guiding principles on professional development of trainers in VET'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/8080>.

Cedefop. 2015a. 'Quality assurance of work based learning'. Draft background paper for the meeting of the ET2020 Working Group on VET. 4-5 May 2015, Brussels.

Cedefop. 2015b. 'Stronger VET for better lives Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies'. 2010-14. In: Vol.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3067>

Cedefop. Forthcoming-a. 'Governance and financing of apprenticeship'. Final report.

Cedefop. Forthcoming-b. 'Ensuring the quality of certification in vocational education and training'. Luxembourg: Publication Office.

Cedefop. Forthcoming-c. 'In-company trainers' professional development' (Working Title). Luxembourg: Publications Office.

Cedefop info. 2007 no 2. 'EuroSkills competition promotes excellence and pride in vocational training'. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/22007>

Council of the European Union. 2008. 'Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies', Council meeting in Brussels, 21 November 2008

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf.

Danish Ministry of Education. 2005. 'Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark. A best practice study'. <http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/index.html>.

Dörflinger, C., Dorr, A., Heckl, E. 2007. 'Aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik im Brennpunkt X. Evaluierung der Wiener JASG-Lehrgänge'. AMS report 55. Wien: Communicatio. <http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/AMSreport55.pdf>.



EQAVET. 2015. 'Web-based guidance on work-based learning'.
<http://www.eqavet.eu/workbasedlearning/GNS/Home.aspx>.

ERI SEE. 2012. 'Modernising VET System Improving Performance, Quality and Attractiveness of VET Systems'.
http://www.erisee.org/sites/default/files/COMPENDIUM%20VET_11102013.pdf.

Eurofound. 2012. 'NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe'.
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/labour-market-social-policies/neets-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-characteristics-costs-and-policy>

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. 2013. '20 Key Factors for Successful Vocational Education and Training'. <https://www.european-agency.org/publications/brochures-and-flyers/20-key-factors-vet>

European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry. 2009. 'Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education and Training', Final report of the Expert Group.
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/smes/vocational/entr_voca_en.pdf.

European Commission. 2012. 'Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union'. Final report. <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/apprenticeship-supply-in-the-member-states-of-the-european-union--pbKE3012434/>.

European Commission. 2013a. 'Study on Policy Measures to improve the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe'. <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/study-on-policy-measures-to-improve-the-attractiveness-of-the-teaching-profession-in-europe--pbNC0113029/>.

European Commission. 2013b. 'Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors A Guidebook for Policy Planners and Practitioners', European Commission, December 2013. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/alliance/apprentice-trainee-success-factors_en.pdf

European Training Foundation. 2014. 'Work-Based Learning. A Handbook for Policy Makers and Social Partners in ETF Partner Countries'.
http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Work_based_learning_handbook

European Training Foundation. 2013. 'Work-Based Learning: Benefits And Obstacles - A Literature Review For Policy Makers And Social Partners In ETF Partner Countries'.
http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Work_based_learning

FAS. 2013. 'Apprenticeship Review – Background Issues Paper'.
<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Apprenticeship-Review-%E2%80%93-Background-Issues-Paper.pdf>.

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. 2013. 'Training for the Future. JOBSTARTER –Objectives, tasks and achievements'.
https://www.bmbf.de/pub/jobstarter_training_for_the_future.pdf



IBW. 2013. 'Governance and support structures to make apprenticeship training attractive to companies: The Austrian approach'. Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy.

Institut Technik und Bildung. 2008. 'Eurotrainer: making lifelong learning possible: a study of the situation and qualifications of trainers in Europe'.

https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/projekt_30557_wlk_so_EUROTRAINER_FinalReport_Vol_1.pdf.

Jørgensen, C.H. 2013. 'When strengths become weaknesses', in Deissinger, Th. & J. Aff, & A. Fuller and C. H. Jørgensen (Eds). Hybrid Qualifications Zürich. Peter Lang Publisher.

Karlson, N., & Persson, K. (n. D.). 2011. 'Effects of work-based learning on companies involved in VET education'. Ratio Working Paper No. 258.

http://ratio.se/app/uploads/2015/09/nk_kp_work_based_learning_258.pdf.

KCC. 2015. '12 Business Benefits of Apprenticeship Training'

https://www.kcc.ac.uk/secure/kcc_works.php.

LSIS. 2012. 'Access to Apprenticeships – Summary of guidance'. March 2012.

OECD. 2010. 'Career Guidance and Post-Secondary Vocational Education and Training'. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/49088569.pdf>.

OECD. 2011. 'OECD reviews of vocational education and training Learning for Jobs'. Pointer for policy development, May 2011 <http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/LearningForJobsPointersfor%20PolicyDevelopment.pdf>.

Polito. 2014. 'Zehn Jahre Berufsbildungsgesetz: Bilanz und Perspektiven. SGB-Positionspapier'. SGB USS. <http://www.sgb.ch/themen/bildung-jugend/artikel/details/zehn-jahre-berufsbildungsgesetz-bilanz-und-perspektiven/>.

REFERNET-Austria/IBW. 2014. 'Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes – Austria'.

http://www.refernet.at/index.php/en/component/docman/doc_download/474-atapprenticeshiparticle2014enfinal.

RefernetDenmark. 2015. 'Denmark - large skill boost for vocational teachers' <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/denmark-large-skill-boost-vocational-teachers>.

ReferNet Finland. 2011. 'VET in Europe: country report Finland'.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/finland-vet-europe-country-report-2011>

Steedman, H. 2005. 'Apprenticeship in Europe: 'Fading' or Flourishing?' CEP Discussion Paper No. 710. London: Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/19877/>.

Steedman, H. 2012. 'Overview of Apprenticeship Systems and Issues ILO Contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment'. International Labour Organization.

http://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_345485/lang--en/index.htm



Thematic Working Group on ESL. 2013. 'Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support'. Final report November 2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/doc/esl-group-report_en.pdf.

UEAPME Paper 'The Contribution of Crafts and SMEs to apprenticeships', 2013.

http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_paper_contribution_of_Crafts_and_SMEs_to_apprenticeships.pdf

Westergaard-Nielsen, et al. 2000. 'The Impact of Subsidies on the Number of new Apprentices', Research in Labor Economics, 18, 359–375.

Wolter, S. 2012. 'Apprenticeship Training Can Be Profitable for Firms and Apprentices Alike', EENEE Policy Brief 3/2012, published in November 2012.

http://www.eenee.de/dms/EENEE/Policy_Briefs/PolicyBrief3-2012.pdf

Wolter, S., & Ryan, P. 2011. 'Apprenticeship'. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin & L. Woessmann (Eds.), Handbook of the Economics of Education, Vol. 3. (pp. 521-576). North-Holland: Elsevier.



Members of the Working Group on Vocational Education and Training

EU Member States			
AT	HORSCHINEGG	Jürgen	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur
BE NL	LAMOTE	Carl	Ministry of Education and Training, Department of Education and Training
BE FR	VAN CAUWENBERGE	Laetitia	Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (IFAPME)
BG	TANEVA	Iliana	Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
CY	MARGADJIS	Elias	Ministry of Education and Culture
DE	THIELE	Peter	Federal Ministry of Education and Research
DK	SAXTORPH	Henrik	Ministry of Education
EE	SIILIVASK	Rita	Ministry of Education and Research
ES	IGLESIAS JIMÉNEZ	Soledad	Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Deputy Guidance and Training
FI	RIIHIMÄKI	Tarja	Ministry of Education and Culture
FR	GUEGUEN	Véronique	DGESCO A2-2, Bureau de la formation professionnelle initiale
FR	HUART	Jean-Marc	Ministère du travail, de l'emploi, de la formation professionnelle et du dialogue social, DGEPF
HR	UROÍC LANDEKIĆ	Andreja	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
HU	ZOLTÁN	Katalin	Ministry for National Economy
IT	MENICHELLI	Alfredo	Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), DG IFTS
LT	SOKOLOVA	Aleksandra	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania
LU	DE CAROLIS	Antonio	Ministère de l'Education nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse
LV	BULIGINA	Ilze	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia
MT	CACHIA	Stephen	Ministry for Education and Employment
NL	VAN IJSSELMUIDEN	Peter	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Directorate of Adult and Vocational Education
PL	KACZMAREK	Anna	Ministry of National Education
PT	ALVES	Maria João	Técnica Superior da Agencia Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (ANQEP)
RO	STROIE	Dana	National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
SE	KARLSSON	Fritjof	Ministry of Education and Research
SI	ČERNOŠA	Slavica	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport



SK	JAKUBÍK	Karol	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
UK	CLARK	Andrew	Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills
Candidate Countries and EFTA Countries			
AL	LIMAJ	Sonila	National Agency for Vocational Education, Training & Qualifications (NAVETO)
RS	KRNETA	Marija	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development
TR	MIDAS	Murat	Ministry of National Education, DG VET
CH	LÜTHI	Jean-Pascal	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)
LI	KRANZ	Werner	Office for Vocational Training and Career Counselling
NO	HERTZBERG	Dagfinn	Ministry of Education and Research
European Social Partners, Chambers and VET Providers			
	NORDHAUS	Hans Ulrich	ETUC, DGB Bundesvorstand/German Trade Unions Confederation
	BEJBRO ANDERSEN	Maja	BusinessEurope, Confederation of Danish Employers
	WEGER	Sabine	UEAPME, APCMA-Assemblée permanente des chambres de métiers et de l'artisanat
	O'MAHONY	Pat	EFEE, Education Research Office, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
	BABRAUSKIENE	Tatjana	CSEE-ETUCE, Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions (FLESTU)
	TANTI	Joe	Eurochambres, Malta Business Bureau
	HODGSON	Pete	European VET Providers Associations, EfVET
European Commission and European Union Agencies			
	SANTOS	João	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
	SCHÖBEL	Norbert	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
	PYÖRÄLÄ	Pirkko	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
	RANIERI	Antonio	Cedefop
	ZELLOTH	Helmut	ETF
Consultants			
	MARKOWITSCH	Jörg	3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH
	EGGERT HANSEN	Martin	CFI Danish Technological Institute
	FEIFS	Toms	ICF

We would especially like to thank Philippe Perfetti, Aleksandra Sokolova, Wolfgang Kreher and Andrew Clark for their role in organizing in-depth country meetings.

A vote of thanks also to Anna Zaremba (trainee in DG EMPL) for her support.