

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Member States - Planned reforms/initiatives

1. Measures to increase the quality, supply and attractiveness of apprenticeships

Considering the Council Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships of 15 October 2013, AUSTRIA undertakes the following measures to increase the quality, supply and attractiveness of apprenticeships. In recent years the following new and quality-oriented measures have been introduced, which establish additional supporting structures for the training in the companies and for the apprentices.

- a) Coaching of apprentices and counselling services for companies
- b) Free of charge preparatory courses for the apprenticeship-leave examinations; costs for repetitions of the final exam are refunded since September 2013
- c) Berufsmatura: Lehre mit Reifeprüfung (= Berufsreifeprüfung) "Apprenticeship and HE entrance qualifications"
- d) Ausbildungsgarantie 'training guarantee' since 2008; new measure: introduction of a bonus for companies that take on apprentices from supra-company apprenticeship scheme in August 2013
- e) The VET Quality Initiative (Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, or QIBB)
- f) A curriculum that allows examiners a formation to become a certified apprenticeship examiner was established in 2013; for all apprenticeship trades training guidelines are being established.

2. Main objective of these reforms / initiatives i.a.

- To establish guidance and counselling structures for support and advice in case of difficulties in the framework of training and questions in regard to design training
- to give support to the young people for better chances to pass the final examinations successfully
- assuring the quality of apprenticeship training and further raise the attractiveness of apprenticeship training both for training companies and young people
- Increasing the permeability from apprenticeship to the general and vocational education system

3. Describe the reform / initiative

Most of the guiding principles defined in the declaration are already implemented based on a constitutive level for the Austrian education and training system. Apprenticeship training is still attractive in Austria and social partners considerably co-determine its structure and content to win over young people for the VET path by launching advertising and information campaigns. Topical and practice-oriented training contents and their continuous updating are of major importance for the Austrian VET sector. Curricula and training plans are therefore regularly adjusted to the requirements of the (future) world of work. One major goal of this adjustment process is to achieve congruency between VET and employment as well as between qualification supply and demand, by attempting to appraise future developments at an early stage and respond to them proactively.

The government programme of the new Austrian government 2013 – 2018 (issued in December 2013) refers explicitly to the 'training guarantee' as one of the major goals. Next steps will be taken to guide and coach pupils at risk (via compulsory job orientation and the extension of intervention measures like youth coaching and coaching for apprentices.)

Another important objective stresses the political will to increase the attractiveness of dual training, which is also one goal of the scheme 'Apprenticeship and upper secondary certificate'. Next steps refer to the establishment of a systematic quality management in training firms. Coaching for apprentices is also important in this context. One focus lies on youth with migrant background.

Description of each reform:

a) Coaching of apprentices and counselling services for companies

– Coaching of apprentices

When difficulties in the course of training occur, both apprentices and trainers can apply for an accompanying coaching. Coaching is conducted by professional coaches and comprises an initial talk, the identification of perspectives, a mediation process as well as support for preparing for the apprenticeship leave examination.

– Counselling services for companies

Additionally training companies can make use of counselling in regard to the conception of training in the company by quality criteria, the acquaintance with the apprentice, information about learning opportunities for the apprentice and the trainers as well as information on subsidies.

b) Preparatory courses for the apprenticeship-leave examinations

Training companies, which give their apprentices the possibility to attend preparatory courses for the apprenticeship leave examination (both subject-specific contents and examination-pedagogical preparation), can get subsidies. If the initiative for attending such a preparatory course for the apprenticeship-leave examination is taken by the apprentice, he or she is free of cost.

c) Berufsmatura: Lehre mit Reifeprüfung (= Berufsreifeprüfung) "Apprenticeship and HE entrance qualifications"

The possibility to prepare for a vocational qualification and the Berufsreifeprüfung certificate aims to enhance permeability within the Austrian education system. The content of the exam is oriented towards the curriculum of an upper secondary school which provides HE entrance qualifications (AHS or BHS) and comprises four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern language, and a specialisation from vocational practice or from IVET.

In addition it aims to further increase the attractiveness of dual training and to promote the concept of lifelong learning in overall. The scheme is free of charge for apprentices based on an additional funding programme provided by the Ministry of Education.

The constantly increasing participant figures confirm the importance of this scheme. It is also planned to evaluate the scheme with regard to the intended effects – increased access to higher education

d) Ausbildungsgarantie 'training guarantee' (since 2008); new measure: introduction of a bonus for companies that take on an apprentice from a supra-company apprenticeship scheme

Every young person up to the age of 18 is offered a training position. The main target groups are young people who have completed their compulsory schooling and cannot find an apprenticeship position in a company based training or do not have a place at an upper secondary school; socially disadvantaged young people, early school leavers, young people with career aspirations which cannot be covered by the available apprenticeship places in companies. Supra-company IVET has become an important element of the dual training system. In 2012 7.6% of all apprentices attended this form of dual training. As much as one third of those who started with supra-company training change to a company based apprenticeship, which is one goal of the scheme. Therefore, it decreases both the rate of ESL and the youth unemployment rate.

In 2013, a lump-sum subsidy of 1000 Euro was introduced that is paid to every employer that is taking on an apprentice of a supra-company training entity. This shall increase the possibility to change from supra-company apprenticeship to a regular apprenticeship position

e) The VET Quality Initiative (QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung, or QIBB)

The scheme aims to implement systematic quality management in vocational schools. The quality management system does not only comprise the level of individual schools, but also

includes all governance levels (including management of the education system and school supervision).

Regarding its objectives, guiding principles and structure, QIBB corresponds to the model of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) and encompasses all VET schools and colleges. Since 2011 quality management is obligatory by law.

f) A curriculum that allows examiners a formation to become a certified apprenticeship examiner; training guidelines

These measures shall increase the general quality of the formation in the company and increase the quality of the final exams. The guidelines will be established for all apprenticeship trades and help companies to design their company-based apprenticeship training. The first ten guidelines for the most frequent trades are already available.

4. Added Value of the reform / initiative

Beginning with the year 2016 Austria will be confronted with a sharp decline in the number of 15 year old young people as beginners of a vocational training in connection with a massive increase of people, which will go on pension. This altogether will result in a big lack of skilled workers, if no measures will be taken to counteract. Another aim of these reforms is to integrate also weaker pupils and offer them the possibility to complete an apprenticeship.

The described measures are intended to fight this threat and shall contribute to the following wider aims:

- to decrease the rate of ESL, NEET and the youth unemployment rate,
- to increase the quality of the apprenticeship system and thereby
- further reduce the number of dropouts in apprenticeship training,
- to further increase the number of young people, who successfully complete apprenticeship training / to further increase the completion rate in apprenticeship training and
- to guarantee the needed number of skilled workers for the companies also in future.

5. What partners will be involved in the reform / initiative at the national and European level

At the national level all relevant Ministries, especially the Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth, the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection as well as the Social Partners (Austrian Economic Chamber, Austrian Chamber of Labour, Trade Union) are involved in these initiatives / measures. At international level a process of coordination with several countries e.g. Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway has been started. Another important international partner is the OECD. On the basis of its diagnostic report on the Austrian education system the elaboration of an "Austrian Skills Strategy" might be envisaged.

6. Contact information, date:

Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth

Division for Vocational Training
Head of Division Alexander Hölbl
Stubenring 1, A - 1011 Vienna
Tel. +43 (0)1 71100 - 5384
Fax +43 (0)1 71100 - 935384
Alexander.hoelbl@bmwfi.gv.at

Karl Wiczorek
Stubenring 1, A - 1011 Vienna
Tel. +43 (0)1 71100 - 5812
Fax +43 (0)1 71100 - 935812
karl.wiczorek@bmwfj.gv.at

Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture

International Multilateral Affairs – EU Coordination/Education
Head of Department Andrea Schmölder
Minoritenplatz 5, A-1014 Wien
Tel. +43-1-53120-4701
andrea.schmoelzer@bmukk.gv.at

Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

International Labour Market Policy
Head of Department Johannes Schweighofer
Stubenring 1, A – 1010 Vienna
Tel. +43 (0)1 71100 - 2056
Johannes.schweighofer@bmask.gv.at

Valerie Bösch
Stubenring 1, A - 1010 Vienna
Tel. +43 (0)1 71100 – 6338
Valerie.boesch@bmask.gv.at

Detailed information on the Austrian apprenticeship system and labour market policies for young people can be found at:

Apprenticeship - Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria:

http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/Vocationaltraining/Apprenticeshipsandvocationaltraining/Documents/Die_Lehre_HP_engl.pdf

Youth and Work in Austria:

http://www.bmask.gv.at/cms/siteEN/attachments/7/8/3/CH2394/CMS1320223144806/130927_youth_an_work_in_austria2012u2013_webversion_en_final.pdf