



European alliance for apprenticeships

Member States – Planned reforms/initiatives

Bulgaria

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

COUNTRY	Bulgaria
Year	2019
Ministry/Ministries	Ministry of Education and Science
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Implementation of the national commitment

Progress and main achievements

A resource working group was established within the Consultative Council for VET in 2018, by the Minister of Education and Science. It was intended to foster the discussion of policies for VET development, including apprenticeships, among representatives of all interested ministries, institutions and organisations in the field of VET, as well as the social partners. The end goal of the Council is to reach a common agreement on further development of the VET system, and of apprenticeships, in Bulgaria (a priority in the Governmental Programme 2017-2021).

Some of the most significant achievements in the period 2015-2018 included the introduction of apprenticeship education/work-based learning (a dual training system) through the implementation of pilot projects:

- The **DOMINO** project, implemented under the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Programme, created a sustainable national model, supported by the State and the business.
- The **Dual Training in Bulgaria** project was supported by the Austrian Industrial Association, and initiated in the town of Panagyurishte. It was financed by Bulgarian companies within the Association of Entrepreneurs.

Other measures implemented included legislative amendments to the VET Act (2014-2018) and to the Ordinance of 2015 on the **rules and conditions for providing work-based learning** (dual training systems). Legislative amendments were also made to the Labour Code, with regulations regarding the **employment contract between the trainee and the employer** introduced, including a condition for work-based learning (a dual training system) **agreed between the trainee and the employer**. Legislative amendments to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) introduced an **incentive for employers to employ unemployed people** for work-based learning (dual training system). The dual training system was upgraded in light of experience gained in the pilot projects, **increasing the number of students in apprenticeships from 353 in 2016-2017 to 3 884 in 2018-2019**. Finally, the Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre implemented a programme for the training of teachers and mentors.

More recent initiatives in-line with the Council recommendation include the **elaboration of training documentation** for new professions that are set to take part in apprenticeship/work-based learning activities from 2019-2020. The Minister of Education and Science has also endorsed a **programme for training mentors** in the basic pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills required for working with trainees. In addition, **the Council of Ministers introduced a resolution** for the amendment and supplementation of Resolution No. 328 of 2017 (on the rules and conditions for students receiving scholarships after completing basic education).

Annually, the National Employment Action Plan provides funding for work-based learning (a dual training system) for unemployed people.

Update of the national commitment

Planned reforms and initiatives

The main objective of the measures and initiatives envisaged will be to enhance the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships in the formal VET system as an effective pathway for vocational education of young people aged 16-19. This will help prevent students leaving school early, and will help adults without qualifications and with low levels of education to gain qualifications

Planned initiatives include a draft Ordinance of the Ministry of Economy for the **information database of employers**, compatible with the requirements for providing apprenticeships/work-based learning (a dual training system). Early career guidance and vocational orientation will be implemented, as well promotional actions aimed at **enhancing the positive image of apprenticeships** by emphasising their relevance to labour market needs and to high employment rates in graduates (e.g. annual national conferences, information campaigns, 'open door' days in companies and regional and national skills competitions).

A 'Support for the Dual Education System' project proposal, under the Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme, is currently in approval stages. This is aimed at upgrading and building upon the good practices and achievements of the DOMINO project. The national model is still new, and is not popular enough for VET schools, employers, students and their parents. The project's activities include a probationary internship at a partner company for more than 9 000 students in the first stage of secondary vocational education (8th-10th grade), financial support for training in theory and practice for 735 teachers and training in pedagogical and methodological skills for 706 mentors.

Targets and/or indicators

n/a

Budget of the reform/initiative

ESF funding foreseen - BGN 24 500 000 (EUR 12 250 000)

15 % national co-financing - BGN 3 675 000 (EUR 1 837 500)

Key stakeholders involved

The main stakeholders involved in the implementation of the national commitment are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Economy and the Resource working group established within the Consultative Council for VET, and the Minister of Education and Science.

Further measures planned as a follow-up to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

n/a

