

## EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

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Considering the Council Declaration<sup>1</sup> on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships of 15 October 2013, **GERMANY** will undertake the following measures to increase the quality, supply and attractiveness of apprenticeships.

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Please describe in 1-3 sentences the **main objective** of this reform/initiative.

The dual system as the linchpin of the German vocational education system has proved effective from the outset when it comes to providing young people with the right combination of competences to get skilled jobs and to opening up career opportunities. Recent data show that once again more than half of the age cohort, i.e. more than 500 000 young adults, signed a contract under the dual apprenticeship scheme in 2013.

The Federal Government and the *Länder* are highly committed to improving the attractiveness and excellence of the vocational education and training system together with the social partners, thus offering VET students access to the labour market or progression routes to further learning and providing businesses and employers with the highly skilled people they need.

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Please **describe the reform/initiative**, by providing an overview of the next steps to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships, along the common guiding principles defined in the Declaration. (Max. 15 lines)

In its coalition agreement, the new government (grand coalition) set out its intention to modernise vocational education and training (VET) in Germany. To this end, more will be done to increase the attractiveness and quality of the educational provision for students and the labour market, to widen access, to facilitate transition between education and training pathways and to enable smooth progression from VET to higher education and vice versa.

In particular, the Federal Government plans to upscale the initiative “educational chains leading to vocational qualifications” (“Bildungsketten”) in cooperation with the *Länder* governments, for which €460 million have been available so far (2010-2014). The initiative targets young people who are not yet fully prepared to enter dual training. Its main objective is to help them start a regular apprenticeship by offering a set of actions and support measures including vocational orientation for school students. As a result, the number of early school leavers will drop and enterprises, especially small and medium-sized companies, will profit from well-equipped candidates for apprenticeships. Moreover, it is planned that the scope of the “National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany” (“Ausbildungspakt”) will be extended to develop it into an “Alliance for initial and continuing vocational education and training” (“Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung”). In so

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139011.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139011.pdf)

doing the Pact partners, i.e. Federal Ministries, the private sector and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder ("Kultusministerkonferenz"), confirm their commitment to offering training to help all young people obtain recognized qualifications by means of high-quality training.

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**What is the added value of the reform/initiative beyond business as usual? Please include information on expected outcomes, as well as targets or indicators of success if possible. (Max. 10 lines)**

The modernisation of VET aims to best exploit the potential of activities and initiatives and to take them to the next level with a view to ensuring the equivalence of VET and higher education systems as well as accreditation and transfer opportunities in and between training systems for the purpose of improving learner mobility, progression and the recognition of achievement. Thus permeability between HE and VET and securing the supply of world-class trained people continue to be a policy priority. This includes the provision of more flexible training, increased efforts to offer every young adult a dual training course, procedures to validate non-formally and informally acquired competences including higher education students seeking access to VET, and the recruitment of foreign VET professionals and talented skilled workers in order to match the skills needs of companies operating in a competitive environment. Instruments, actions, results and policy initiatives will be judged by their ability to reverse the slight decrease in the number of companies offering dual training places and to guarantee the learner best-fit progression routes.

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**What partners will be involved in the reform/initiative at the national and the European levels?**

- Federal ministries, more specifically the Federal Minister of Education and Research (BMBF) and Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)
- the social partners
- the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)
- the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)
- VET research institutions

and, at the European level, the cooperation partners that signed the Berlin Memorandum in December 2012 (Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Slovakia and Latvia) as well as the five like-minded countries (Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland).

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