

## **EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS (EAfA)**

### **CANDIDATE COUNTRIES – PLANNED REFORMS INITIATIVES**

Considering the aims and principles of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) included in the Council Declaration<sup>1</sup>, dated of 15 October 2013, Albania will undertake the following policy measures to increase the quality, supply and attractiveness of apprenticeships.

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#### **Main objective**

Albania's National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2014-2020 (approved by the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 818, dated 26.11.2014) has set the stage for comprehensive reforms on employment and skills development at all levels. The Strategy is based on the assumption that determined action is needed in order to improve the skills of the labour force and increase employment opportunities particularly for youth, women and vulnerable groups. The establishment of a quality TVET system, based on the dual approach and which supports lifelong learning is one of the strategic priorities identified (see NESS, Measure B.4. Strengthening the linkages between learning and work). Additional priorities include modernising employment services and implementing more effective and inclusive active labour market programmes by 2020. Social dialogue is at the core of all policy reform, starting from the design phase, to implementation and steering mechanisms.

The main objective of these measures is to reform the TVET system, including work based learning mechanisms, as per the dual approach on education and training.

Apprenticeships are, therefore, foreseen as one of the policy actions to be developed in close cooperation with the private sector and other relevant Ministries, as the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship. Due to the early stage of design of the dual approach in Albania, efforts are being made in a three-fold perspective: (i) on the creation of the appropriate legal basis; (ii) on the changing of TVET provision (programmes, curricula, standards and learning methodologies); and (iii) on the linking of TVET provisioning with selected active labour market measures, promoting on-the-job training and work-based learning schemes for different profiles of jobseekers.

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#### **Measures to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships**

i) *A modern Legal Framework* - The current initiatives aiming at revising four main legal acts in Albania (i.e. the Labour Code, the Employment Promotion Law, the Vocational Education and Training Law and the Albanian Qualification Framework Law), together with the preparation of the new Crafts Law, will enable the supply of apprenticeship schemes, in close cooperation with private businesses, and preparing the conditions for a better and more institutionalized involvement of the Micro and SMEs (which are more than 95% of the companies in the country). This revision will allow to have formalized work-based learning processes, and at the same time a better social protection of apprentices.

- *Quality and Innovative TVET provision* - Bringing closer the companies and TVET providers on their efforts of qualifying the Albanian labour force is a driven force of the reform. The reform is being set

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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)

up with the objective of making elements of the dual system a reality for the Albanian education and training system<sup>2</sup>, based on the best practices of partner countries, as Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Aiming at certifying the competences acquired at the workplace, a methodology for validation and certification of vocational competences has been tested in a particular sector (the garment and footwear manufacturing industry) and is ready for spreading and up-scaling to other economic sectors, in the scope of the Albanian Qualification Framework implementation. Apprenticeship schemes will be even more valued within this approach. The setting up of Sector Councils/Committees will co-ordinate better TVET providers with the demand of the private sector and will facilitate the processes of curricula updating, implementation of apprenticeship schemes, development of occupational standards and others.

- *Inclusive and Accessible labour market* - Based on a comprehensive review of the existing Employment Promotion Programmes carried out in early 2015<sup>3</sup>, a (re)design of the measures focussed on linking VET provisioning with work-based learning schemes will be undertaken in order to increase their inclusiveness and effectiveness towards the most vulnerable groups of jobseekers, which include the youth, women over 45 years old and other ethnic and/or social minorities. The combination of these redesigned measures with more incentives given to Micro and SMEs to apply for these programmes can make the difference on the labour market integration of such groups. Raising awareness campaigns on "how to work & learn and how to learn & work" will be developed together with business representatives, public employment services and VET providers.

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### **Added value of these measures and expected outcomes**

The expected outcomes of these measures are the following:

1. A modern legislative framework is elaborated and adopted by the Government of Albania, with the participation and support of social partners, enables the implementation of apprenticeship schemes in Albania.
2. The integration of elements of the "dual approach" in the TVET system in Albania, strengthens its quality and innovative mechanisms, such as recognition and validation of vocational skills, within the Albanian Qualification Framework implementation.
3. The Albanian labour market is more inclusive and creates more job opportunities for all, promoting a smooth transition from education to work and generating lifelong learning options.

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### **Partners involved at the national and the European levels**

The partners to be involved in these measures at the national level are:

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<sup>2</sup> **Apprenticeship Schemes for Youth Employability in Albania** (EUR 300,000; 2015-2017) is a project funded by the European Commission and co-funded by the Government of Albania (25%) aims of to identify a sustainable way of implementing apprenticeship as a systematic and rigorous work-place based learning scheme in Vocational Secondary Education. The project is being implemented in collaboration between NAVETQ and the Hamburger Institute für Berufliche Bildung (HIBB).

<sup>3</sup> ILO-EU IPA 2010 Project on HRD & RISI Albania Project (2014), "*Employment Promotion Programmes in Albania: An assessment of its quality in the formulation and implementation processes (2008-2014)*", Tirana. (accessible at <http://www.ipa-hrd.al/Komponenti2/10-EPP/EPP-FINAL-REPORT.pdf>)

- The responsible Ministries for employment, skills development and social policies, for business development and entrepreneurship, for education and science, and others in charge of sectoral economic policies;
- The National Labour Council, having the most representative social partners;
- The National Employment Service (NES);
- The National Agency for VET and Qualification (NAVETQ);
- The VET providers and employment offices;

At the European level, the on-going bilateral cooperation programmes with the Government of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, complemented by the assistance of EU agencies and UN organizations, such as the ILO and UNDP, creates the ground for a sound implementation of such measures according to the best international practices.

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**Contact information:**

**Mr. Andri Gjini**

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

e-mail: [andri.gjini@sociale.gov.al](mailto:andri.gjini@sociale.gov.al)

Phone: + 355 4 450 4950

<http://www.sociale.gov.al>

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