



Good for Youth Good for Business

European Alliance
for Apprenticeships



Social Europe

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European Alliance
for Apprenticeships



EARN & GAIN
TRAIN & LEARN

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Preface



Marianne Thyssen

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

Apprenticeships are an excellent way to help young people move from education and training into jobs. Since the launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) in 2013, almost one million training and job opportunities for young people have been mobilised. Six years on, our engagement with the world of business through the Alliance has given an enormous boost to the supply, quality, image and mobility of apprenticeships. It involves national commitments from 36 countries as well as engagements from numerous stakeholders, such as companies, social partners, chambers, education and training providers, regional authorities, youth and parent organisations as well as research bodies.

I am also committed to the idea that vocational and educational training is a valid first choice, not a second option to be followed if all else fails. During my mandate, we have launched 'ErasmusPro', a new opportunity for longer-term apprenticeship mobility within the current Erasmus programme. A fourth edition of the European Vocational Skills Week, our campaign to showcase quality and excellence in vocational and educational training, will take place this year in Helsinki. This European Vocational Skills Week is organised in close cooperation with the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It will also include the next EAfA meeting, this time focusing on apprenticeships for adults.

Since adopting the Skills Agenda for Europe in 2016, we have continued to roll out measures that support quality apprenticeships in Europe. On 15 March 2018, the Council endorsed our proposal on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. On 8 December 2018, the Commission launched the Apprenticeship Support Service to support Member States and all relevant stakeholders in their reform process. In addition, the Commission has supported the launch of the first ever European Apprentices Network. We want to ensure that young apprentices have their voices heard in discussions on vocational and educational training, in particular when it comes to apprenticeships.

In this brochure, you will find some of the stories behind the numbers. Young people, who, because of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, have got their foot onto the jobs ladder and a good career, which will allow them to follow their passion. Companies who are stepping up to the mark and acting as an inspiration to others in opening up new opportunities for young people and invigorating their business with the skills that will help them to thrive.

I hope you enjoy reading about the achievements and success stories of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. A lot has already happened, but the journey continues. With stakeholders' full commitment, we will continue to achieve great things in the coming years.

Foreword



Li Andersson

Minister of Education, Finland,
on behalf of Finland's Presidency of the Council of the EU

The best way to cope in this rapidly changing world is to ensure a high level of skills and equal opportunities. Education and training, skills and reskilling are the most critical means of dealing with the transformation of work. Consequently, measures promoting employment are increasingly influenced by how individual skills meet labour market needs and how this matching can be continuously and flexibly developed. While vocational education and training provides individuals with professional skills, it also promotes the functioning, productivity and growth of the labour market and boosts employees' commitment to their work and to society. Our focus must be on skills, and we should enable people to acquire them in ways that best suit both individuals and the labour market. To that end, the focus has shifted from one-off investments in skills to continuous reskilling.

Employers' skills requirements are no longer limited to a specific degree or a certain area of professional competence. As a result, people must be ready to keep learning throughout life, which also poses new challenges for education and training systems. We must urgently focus on the relevance of learning, and our systems must be fit to ensure the necessary competences and skills for life and work. Providing continuous learning opportunities for reskilling and upskilling is the key to a sustainable future.

At its best, apprenticeship training serves as a link between employers and talent. In order to provide effective and high-quality apprenticeship training, we need consultation and close involvement of stakeholders in the anticipation, planning, implementation and evaluation stages. I am certain many untapped opportunities remain in this area, and the EAFa provides a European forum for advancing them.

During its Presidency of the Council, Finland will highlight the need for continuous learning and the role of education in building an equal and successful society.

Education and training provide the best safeguard against exclusion and lack of prospects. Through its transforming impact, inclusive, quality education is a powerful equaliser in society. Education is not only a fundamental human right: it is also pivotal for participation, democracy and critical thinking, and for making informed choices and evidence-based decisions. The EAFa meeting, to be held in Finland in October 2019, will provide an opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas on apprenticeship training as a high-quality form of education that meets the needs of lifelong learning.

The policy context

Since 2002, European countries and social partners have been cooperating in the field of vocational education and training through the Copenhagen Process. The 2010 Bruges Communiqué set out a vision for modern and attractive vocational education and training (VET) to be achieved by 2020. Following a mid-term review of the progress, five key priorities to further improve VET systems were set in 2015 for the period until 2020:

1 Work-based learning

Promote work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship.

2 Quality assurance

Further develop quality assurance mechanisms in VET in line with the EQAVET recommendation and, as part of quality assurance systems, establish continuous information and feedback loops to initial VET and continuous VET systems based on learning outcomes.

3 Accessibility

Enhance access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible and permeable systems, notably by offering efficient, integrated guidance services and by introducing tools to validate non-formal and informal learning.

4 Key competences

Further strengthen key competences in VET curricula and provide more effective opportunities to acquire or develop those skills through initial VET and continuous VET.

5 VET teachers and trainers

Introduce systematic approaches and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors in both school and work-based settings.



In 2018, the tripartite Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) unanimously adopted an opinion on the future of VET after 2020.

It sets a shared vision of governments, trade unions and employers' organisations from EU Member States and partner countries on how to help VET systems adapt to the future societal and economic challenges.

The opinion stresses:

the role of VET in supporting acquisition of **job specific and transversal skills**

calls for a better balancing of investment and funding between **initial and continuing VET**

the dual objectives of VET for fostering **social inclusion and excellence**

The opinion calls for the setup of **excellent, inclusive and lifelong VET** and defines:

the building blocks of future-fit VET systems

three key objectives to achieve this vision related to:

- the content of VET
- the provision of VET
- the governance of VET systems

stakeholders' views on the main features of the future European cooperation in VET and possible actions to be carried out at European level

Apprenticeships in recent EU policy initiatives

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on the need for high quality apprenticeships to facilitate successful school-to-work transitions and increase the employment prospects of young people. Apprenticeships are therefore an important part of several policy initiatives:



Youth Guarantee (2013)



Riga Conclusions (2015)



A Skills Agenda for Europe (2016)



European Pillar of Social Rights (2017)



European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018)

According to the Council Recommendation, EU Member States should ensure that apprenticeship schemes are responsive to labour market needs and provide benefits to both learners and employers by building on two sets of criteria for quality and effective apprenticeships.

Criteria for learning and working conditions

1. written contract	2. learning outcomes	3. pedagogical support	4. workplace component	5. pay and/or compensation	6. social protection	7. work, health and safety conditions
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Criteria for framework conditions

1. regulatory framework	2. involvement of social partners	3. support for companies	4. flexible pathways and mobility	5. career guidance and awareness raising	6. transparency	7. quality assurance and graduate tracking
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Member States should also promote the active involvement of social partners in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes.



For more details, see: [the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships](#)

European Alliance for Apprenticeships: its roots and successes

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA) was launched in 2013 to help tackle youth unemployment. It is based on a Joint Declaration by the European Commission, the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU and the European social partners and was supported by a Council Declaration by EU Member States in October 2013. Its members are committed to taking action to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships as well as the mobility of apprentices.



Apprenticeships are a priority because the combination of learning in school and training on the job gives young people the skills mix employers need. More and better apprenticeships are key to increase competences and ensure the employability of young people. It is also key to ensure the competitiveness of companies in a changing world of work. In fact, 2 in 3 apprentices land a job directly after their apprenticeship. This is highly valuable, knowing that 40 % of employers say they cannot find people with the right skills. Through apprenticeships, young people can get a foothold in the labour market and businesses can recruit people with the skills they need.

Growing interest

Interest in apprenticeships is growing and new members are joining the EaFA regularly. By March 2017, companies and stakeholders had made over 200 pledges. By September 2019, almost 300 stakeholders had joined the Alliance and pledged to provide over 906 000 apprenticeships and other training or first job opportunities for young people. Altogether, 36 countries have made national commitments under the Alliance, including 27 EU Member States (bar the UK), all 5 candidate countries and all 4 EFTA countries. Companies, social partners and education and training providers are the biggest stakeholder groups in the Alliance.

State of play

Supply

Most vocational students in Europe are in school and lack access to training in real world settings. The EAfA has helped to secure training and first job opportunities for young people. Member States have also included apprenticeships in their Youth Guarantee schemes and are improving support for apprenticeships. With EU funding, employers' organisations undertook a study on the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeships, which is central to improving supply. Around two thirds of the pledges focus on supply of apprentices.

Quality

When developing apprenticeships, quality is crucial. Over three quarters of EAfA pledges focus on quality issues. The ET 2020 Working Group on VET has developed a report with 20 guiding principles for high-performance apprenticeships. Furthermore, with the Commission's support the European trade unions developed a study on a 'European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships'. On 15 March 2018, the Council, following the Commission's proposal of October 2017, adopted a Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. The framework sets out 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, ensuring both the development of job-related skills and the personal development of apprentices. It takes into account the diversity of VET systems across the EU and respects the Member States' competence in the area of VET.

Image

Apprenticeships are too often seen as a second choice. Since 2016, the Commission has organised an annual European Vocational Skills Week, which also includes the EAfA Awards ceremony for companies and apprentices, in order to improve the image of vocational training and apprenticeships. Similar events have been organised in Member States and two thirds of EAfA pledges focus on image building.

Mobility

One third of EAfA pledges focus on cross-border mobility. Erasmus+ finances apprentice mobility, and together with ErasmusPro which was launched in 2018, aims to facilitate long-term placements in working environments in another country and provide young people with job specific vocational skills. Since 2018, apprenticeships with a work contract are also included in EURES – the European job mobility portal.



Overview of stakeholders in the Alliance

Research institutes/think tanks

Regional and local authorities

Non-profit/youth organisations

Companies and business organisations

Social partners

Education and training providers

Professional bodies and networks

Chambers of commerce/industry/crafts

EaFA – Evaluation results

A monitoring survey launched by the Apprenticeship Support Services has evaluated the achievements of the EaFA pledges, identified the key challenges to their implementation and investigated the main areas in which EaFA members require support. The survey collected 103 responses and the full report is available on the EaFA web page.

How the stakeholders see the Alliance

The consulted members of the Alliance reported that the EaFA is either a valuable or a very valuable (94 %) multi-stakeholder platform to boost the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships as well as the mobility of apprentices. EaFA members particularly appreciate the networking opportunities provided by the Alliance and the possibility to interact with peers and stakeholders from other countries.

The added value of the EaFA is confirmed by the high rate of respondents willing to renew their pledge (70 %). At the same time, the EaFA members that do not wish to renew their pledge would still like to be part of the Alliance and remain active members, continuing to promote the work of the EaFA in their networks and participate in the meetings and events organised by the Alliance.

Pledges and implementation progress

Ensuring the quality of apprenticeships is the objective of most of the pledges (233), followed by those focusing on increasing the supply of apprenticeships (194) and on improving the image of apprenticeships (191). About a third of the total pledges aimed at enhancing the mobility of apprentices (110). Pledge implementation has progressed well. At the time of the survey (first quarter of 2019), 14 % of respondents had already completed their pledge, while approximately 70 % of respondents reported major or some progress with their pledges.

Level of progress reported in the implementation of pledges

	Major progress	Some progress	Little or no progress
Supply	35 %	51 %	14 %
Quality	40 %	48 %	13 %
Image	36 %	50 %	14 %
Mobility	17 %	49 %	34 %

Supply of apprenticeship places

Approximately 86 % of pledges focusing on the supply of new apprenticeship places reported major or some progress. Of these, 46 % of pledges created less than 100 apprenticeship places each and 10 % of them created more than 10 000 apprenticeship places. Through the data collected by the monitoring survey, it has been estimated that the pledges monitored have created more than 212 000 learning opportunities in total in the period 2017-2018.

Improving the quality of apprenticeships

Respondents reported that the quality of apprenticeships has been improved mostly through ad hoc trainings, strategic and high-level partnerships and better guidance on quality assurance practices. The adoption of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships was also deemed as a crucial step to boost the quality of apprenticeships. Finally, according to the respondents, the quality of apprenticeships has also improved thanks to specific monitoring and communication activities, as these provide evidence-based results and eventually enhance the visibility of apprenticeships among other stakeholders and policymakers.

Improving the image of apprenticeships

Respondents reported that the image of apprenticeships was improved mostly through:

- ▶ participation in high-level events,
- ▶ enhanced communication,
- ▶ dissemination activities,
- ▶ modernisation of the working equipment and facilities.

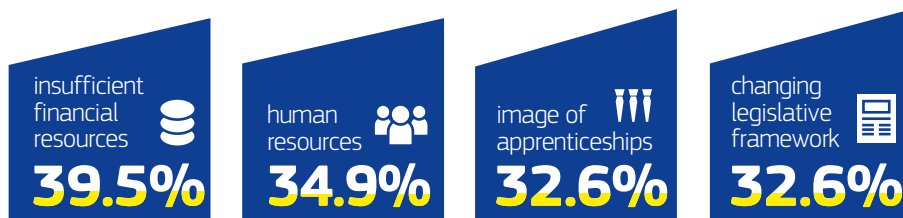
Through the submission of their pledge to the EAfA, respondents argued that it has been possible to increase the number of dissemination and communication activities undertaken by, for instance, organising conferences and high-level meetings (social dialogue, ministerial level roundtables, etc.). The opportunity to organise these types of communication activities strongly contributed to raising awareness on the topic among both key stakeholders and the general public.

Promoting mobility of apprentices in Europe

The mobility of apprentices was promoted mainly through participation in European mobility programmes (most importantly, Erasmus+) or through the development of company-based internal mobility programmes. However, other respondents argued that the lack of funding at the national level to support the mobility of apprentices represents an important barrier for many SMEs and organisations in different Member States.

Implementing pledges: key challenges

The main challenges and obstacles reported by SMEs while trying to fulfil pledges included:



Other stakeholders reported further challenges including the lack of social dialogue and the lack of involvement of teachers and education providers in policy development and implementation in the field of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships – A successful form of 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. There are broadly three main forms of WBL:

1. Apprenticeships

The term apprenticeships is defined and understood differently across EU Member States. However, the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships defines apprenticeships as formal VET schemes:



2. School-based VET with on-the-job training

This second form of work-based learning includes on-the-job training periods in companies. These periods vary in length and typically entail shorter internships, work placements or traineeships that are incorporated as a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications.

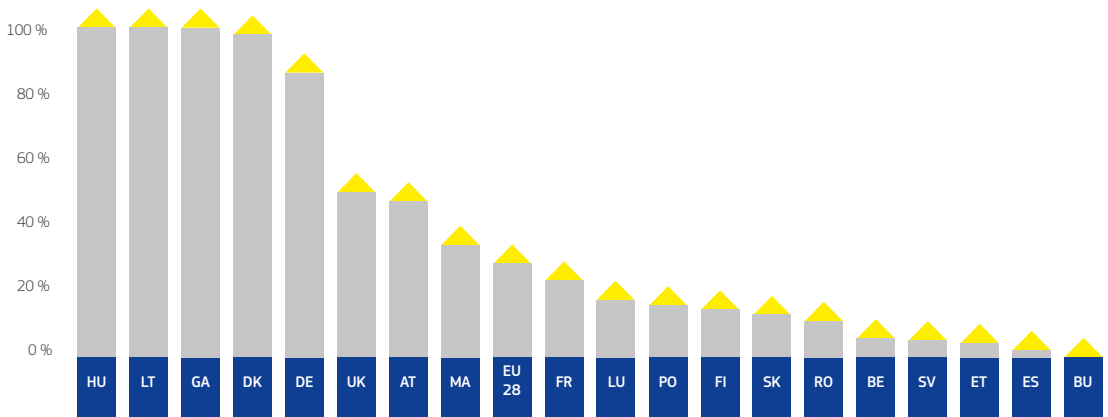
3. Work-based learning in schools

WBL can also be integrated in a school-based programme through on-site labs, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry project assignments. The aim is to create 'real life' work environments, establish contacts and/or cooperation with real companies or clients, and develop entrepreneurship competences.

Work-based learning across Member States

The combination of practical experience and theoretical learning is now well recognised as an effective approach to providing relevant skills, facilitating the application of theoretical knowledge and improving the transition of students into the labour market.

Based on available data, in only a few countries in the EU (Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and to a lesser extent Austria and the UK) the majority of VET students are enrolled in combined school- and work-based learning programmes, providing significant, structured and curriculum-linked work-based learning opportunities. No combined work and school-based programmes were reported in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal or Slovenia.



Source: Eurostat (UOE, 2017), online data code educ_uoe_enrs04, Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation, sex, type of institution and intensity of participation.



Comparing apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships are not to be confused with traineeships. The table below presents a comparison of the two schemes:

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship
Scope	Full qualifying professional or vocational education and training profile	Complements an educational programme or individual CV
Goal	Professional profile/qualification	Documented practical experience
Educational level	Usually EQF levels 3-5	All EQF levels (pre-)vocational education, in higher education and after graduation
Content	Acquisition of the full set of knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation	Vocational, work or career orientation. Acquisition of some knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation/ profession
On-the-job learning	Equally important to coursework	Usually complementing coursework or optional extra
Length	Fixed, medium-long term Usually 1-4 years	Varying, short- to medium-term Usually less than one year
Employment status	Typically employee status	Student, trainee or volunteer
Compensation	Typically paid (amount negotiated or set by law) Apprenticeship allowance	Varying remuneration, often unpaid Unregulated financial compensation
Governance	Strongly regulated, often by both social partners and VET providers	Unregulated or partly regulated

Source: Adapted from an overview in 'Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes In EU 27: Key Success Factors', European Commission (2013)

Who benefits from apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships benefit companies, learners and society as a whole. Good-quality schemes make young people more employable (60-70 % secure employment on completion). They help companies build productive workforces too, and training firms normally recoup their investment by the end of or shortly after the training period. Good apprenticeships also boost employment, reducing the need for social security and increasing social inclusion.

Companies	Learners	Society
Skills Mastering skills development	Skills Practical skills that employers look for	Skills Skills in line with labour market needs
Recruitment Targeted recruitment with lower costs	Work experience Valuable and practical experience to put on a CV	Connecting education with work Worlds of education and work connect and align
Productivity Apprentices also work and contribute to productivity	Quicker job Apprentices find jobs more quickly than their peers	Youth employment Easier access to labour market for young people
Innovation Fresh perspectives from apprentices	Better paid Apprentices are better paid in their first jobs	Social inclusion Participation in education, working life and society
Reputation Enhanced standing and recognition	Longer contract Apprentices stay longer in their first job	

“ Apprenticeships yield benefits to employers through the productive work carried out by apprentices while on the programme, as well as through long-term recruitment benefits realised by employers after the end of the apprenticeship period. ”

Source: *Striking the right balance: Costs and benefits of apprenticeship*, OECD (2017)

Education and Training 2020 Working Groups

The Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) Working Groups have been set up as part of the EU's policy cooperation process in education and training. These groups, which cover different sectors and topics, aim to support policy making at both EU and national level. They also offer a forum for exchange of experience and good practice. The groups consists of government officials as well as representatives from social partners and other key stakeholders.

Since 2014, the ET 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education and Training (VET) has been working on the following topics:

1. High-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 20 guiding principles (2014-2015)

In line with the Riga VET objectives (2015-2020), the purpose has been 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 labour market needs. The rationale is that enhancing 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 guiding 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.

The results of the document – which was translated into Turkish, Armenian and even Mandarin – also provided a key input when preparing the Commission's proposal for the Council Recommendation on a European Framework on Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.



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

2. Teachers and Trainers Matter – How to support them in high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning (2016-2018)

Recognising the central role that teachers and trainers play in the apprenticeship sector, the working group identified key issues, from which it then developed 12 'policy pointers'. These pointers have been grouped into four central topics:



For more information, see [Teachers and trainers matter](#) (p. 4)

Designed to be applicable in every country, according to specific needs and contexts, these pointers not only have a vital role to play in successfully supporting teachers and trainers, but can also be used to support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.

Given that different countries are at different stages with respect to the policy pointers, it is possible to envisage a 'development cycle' in which there is a continuous process of development and review for each of the pointers. This cycle includes three phases:

1. review phase → **2.** piloting and consolidation phase → **3.** ongoing development phase



Teachers and trainers matter
How to support them in high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 12 policy pointers

3. Innovation and digitalisation – ET 2020 Working Group on Innovation and Digitalisation: Boosting high-quality Vocational Education and Training and Higher VET (2018-2020)

The purpose of this working group is to discuss the role and potential of innovation and digitalisation to create more flexible, modern and sustainable high-quality VET systems. This involves examining innovation and digitalisation within VET and its link to other pathways, but also reflects the impact of broader trends of innovation and digitalisation on VET in economies and labour markets (e.g. Industry 4.0, robotisation, Artificial Intelligence). Ultimately, the goal is to further enhance employability and personal development of young learners and of working age people in VET, hence contributing to the competitiveness of companies, sustainable growth and social cohesion.

The working group will address the following topics:

- ▶ new pedagogical approaches for teachers and trainers,
- ▶ strengthening key competences by adapting curricula/training programmes and regulations responsive to rapidly changing labour markets,
- ▶ new learning environments and organisational developments in training institutions and companies,
- ▶ use of modern learning technologies in VET and higher VET,
- ▶ pro-active and flexible VET systems supporting smart specialisation strategy and industrial clusters,
- ▶ quality and excellence in VET,
- ▶ governance and financing in terms of cost-sharing and investing in infrastructure,
- ▶ support for VET learning mobility, careers without borders and VET internationalisation.



Apprenticeship Support Services

The Apprenticeship Support Services were launched at the third European Vocational Skills Week in Vienna in November 2018. Their aim is to improve the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships across the EU through tailored support to stakeholders involved in delivering apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeship Support Services are based on three pillars:

- ▶ a knowledge hub to share and access information relevant to apprenticeship design and delivery, and to simplify access to studies, evidence or statistical data relating to apprenticeships,
- ▶ a networking hub to facilitate the exchange of ideas and cooperation amongst stakeholders,
- ▶ benchlearning (combining benchmarking with peer learning) to provide a structured process and approach to mutual learning among Member States on improving their apprenticeship systems.

While the first two pillars are open to all stakeholders of the Alliance (EU Member States, candidate countries and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members, as well as businesses, social partners, chambers, VET providers, regions, youth representatives and think tanks), the benchlearning pillar is essentially addressed to national governments.

The three pillars of the Apprenticeship Support Services

Knowledge sharing

Library of tools and resources

Online training tools

Digital inspiration (podcasts, webinars, videos...)

Networking

Thematic groups

Social networking

Events (launch conference, thematic workshops)

Benchlearning

Benchmarking

Peer learning

Expert support

Benchlearning

Benchlearning is a structured, systematic process combining benchmarking and mutual learning to help national governments in their drive to introduce and/or pursue apprenticeship reforms. It builds on the benchlearning experiences of the European Network of Public Employment Services. The seven criteria for working and learning conditions and the seven criteria for framework conditions set out in the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships are considered to be the model for the benchlearning process.

Benchlearning facilitates knowledge sharing, networking and mutual learning. It is an iterative, ongoing and developing process, and is subject to continuing development, refinement and improvement. Benchlearning acknowledges the diversity of apprenticeship systems and different stages of development across Member States, and thus provides a demand driven response to the individual needs of countries, with the involvement of stakeholders at national level.

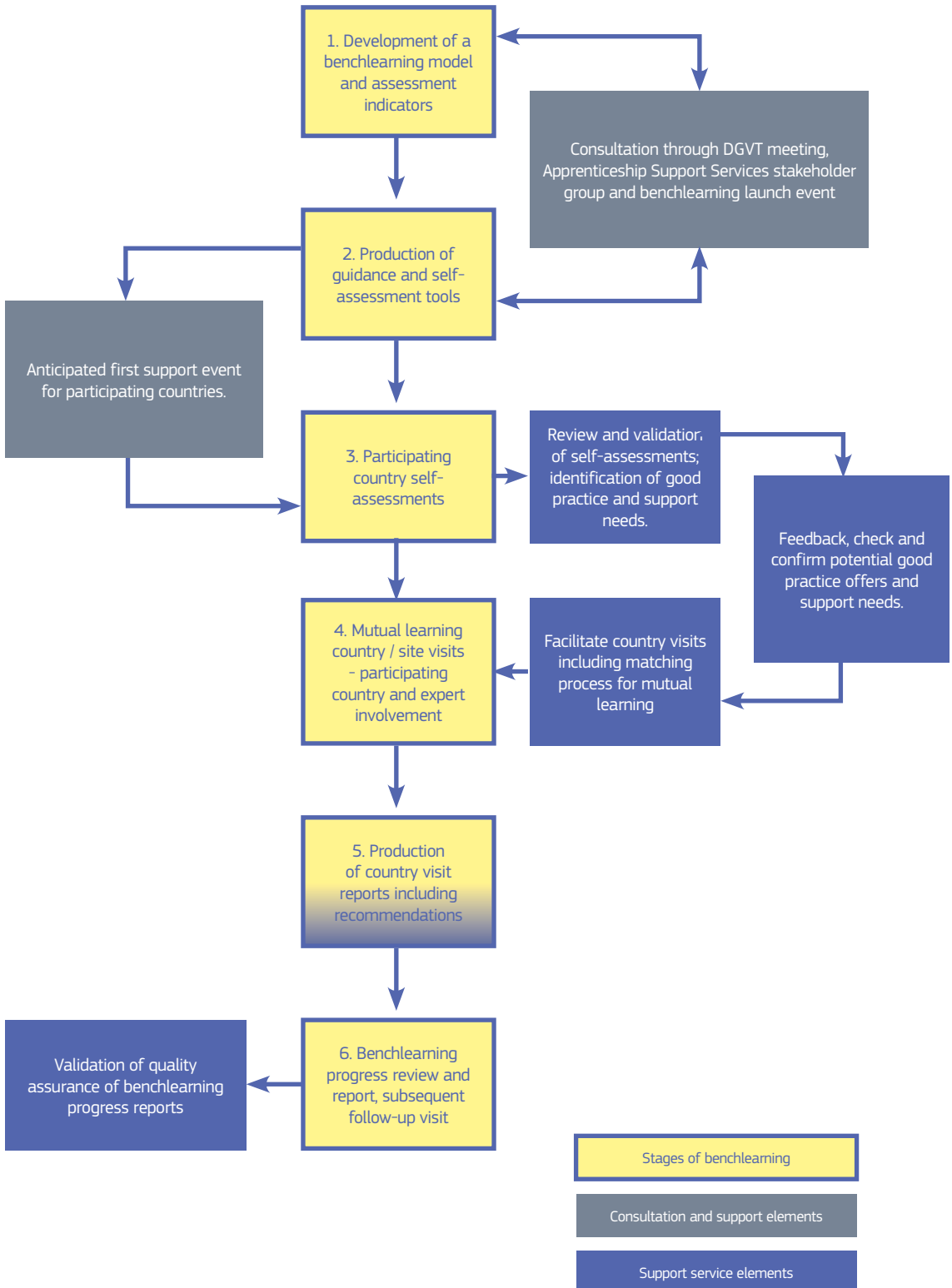


Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018/C 153/01)

The benchlearning cycle

The benchlearning cycle consists of six stages:

- ▶ Stage 1 – A 'quality and effective apprenticeships' model and indicators is produced.
- ▶ Stage 2 – Guidance and tools for participating countries are developed.
- ▶ Stage 3 – Participating governments can complete self-assessments against the agreed indicators. Self-assessment reports are then used to identify strengths and weaknesses, as countries can not only offer guidance and support but also learn from other participating countries and experts.
- ▶ Stage 4 – The support services facilitate country visits focused on mutual learning, sharing good practice and exchanging development support and advice.
- ▶ Stage 5 – Country visit reports are drawn up, including recommendations stemming from the visit itself and self-assessment.
- ▶ Stage 6 – 12 months after the visit, and following the implementation of these recommendations, participating countries prepare a report reflecting on any developments and progress made. After another 12 months, follow-up visits focusing on change and progress as well as areas of improvement and support needs for the next benchlearning cycle can then be scheduled if necessary.



Getting small businesses on board

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including micro-enterprises, provide around two-thirds of private sector employment in Europe. Yet they sometimes struggle to provide apprenticeship placements. Reasons for this include a lack of training infrastructure and personnel to supervise apprentices, as well as insufficient expertise to manage complex rules and administrative requirements. At the same time, small businesses often struggle to fill vacant apprenticeship positions due to the lack of attractiveness of some sectors for young people.

Some companies are naturally less willing to take on apprentices, particularly if they have not trained apprentices before. Employers may worry about the potential costs of offering training placements, notably if an apprentice subsequently leaves the company.

Support measures for SMEs

The success of policy initiatives for apprenticeships and youth employability also depends largely on more SMEs being involved in providing placements. Moreover, if companies are to offer good-quality apprenticeships, they must make appropriate investments, including in human resources. To meet these challenges, governments are focusing on targeted support and enabling measures that boost SME provision of apprenticeships.

A number of good practices and support measures for companies, particularly SMEs, both financial and non-financial, have been identified in the 20 guiding principles for high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning (see guidance of ET 2020 VET Working Group on VET in 2015) and are still valid. Besides the company and SME dimension, the guidance identifies the main challenges for providers, which will be to improve governance, quality assurance and career guidance while engaging social partners and enhancing the image of apprenticeships.

“*Crafts and SMEs are not only the backbone of the economy in Europe, they are also the main providers of apprenticeship placements. In order to remain attractive for SMEs in all Member States, apprenticeship schemes should become more cost-effective and benefit from good governance involving SME representatives. The 2018 Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships is the best approach to make apprenticeships more attractive for small businesses and for young people.*”

Liliane Volozinskis, Social Affairs and Training Policy Director – SMEunited

EU funded projects on engaging SMEs in apprenticeships

In 2015, a specific Erasmus+ call under key action 3 – national support to policy reform – financed 16 projects on the engagement of SMEs in apprenticeships. The projects focused in particular on SMEs with no previous experience of apprenticeships. In total, the projects were worth € 8.3 million. The two-year projects were implemented between 2016 and 2018.

There were two types of partnerships under this call:

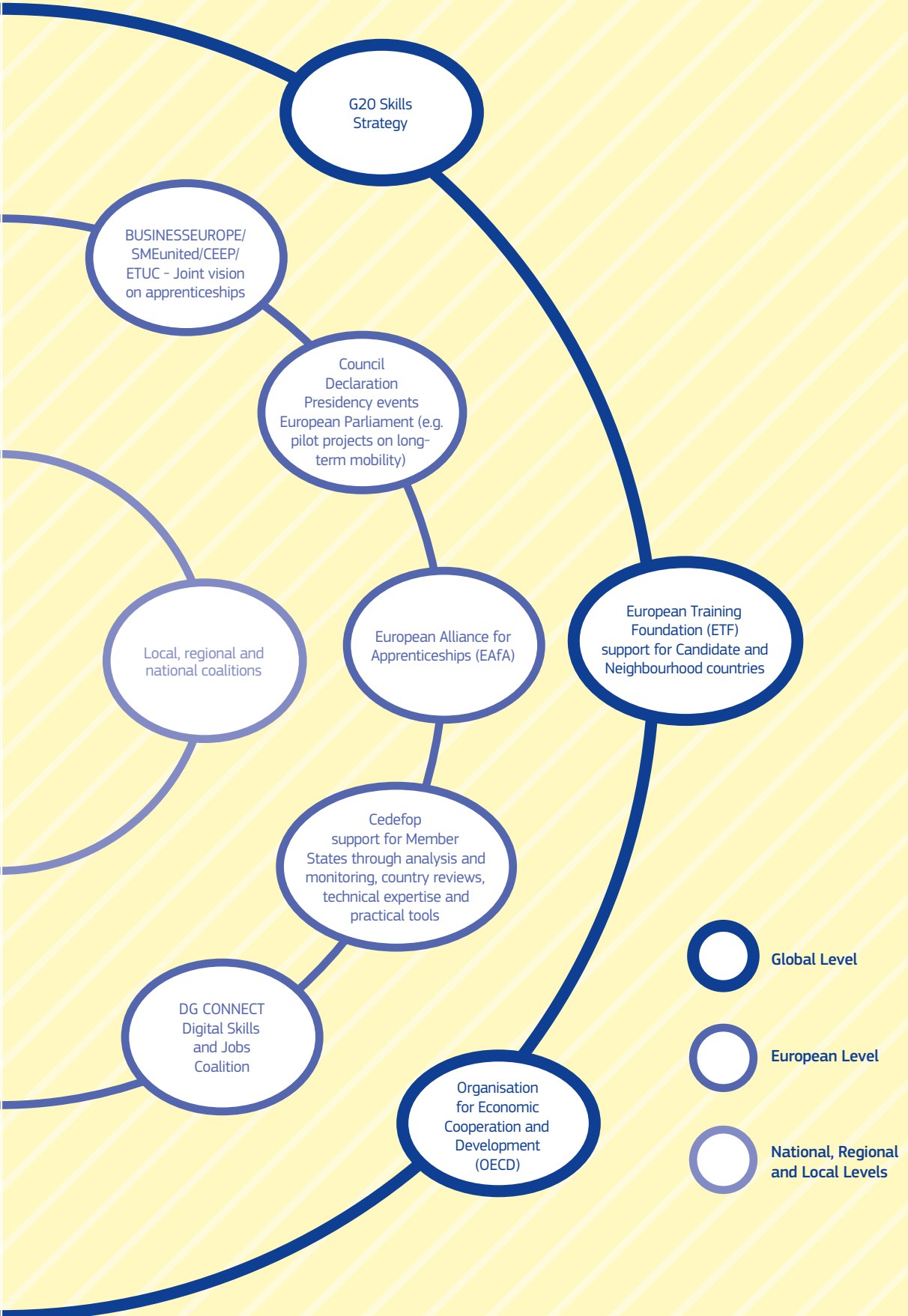
- ▶ Building up intermediary bodies, such as chambers of commerce and professional organisations, to develop SME support structures and establish partnerships with bigger companies to assist SMEs in increasing the supply of apprenticeships (12 projects).
- ▶ Targeted cooperation between the umbrella organisation of existing European networks and organisations and their national members or affiliates for developing and setting up support for SMEs (4 projects).

Some of the main activities included creating and strengthening networks and alliances, developing resources and tools, fostering teaching and training, as well as learning and sharing experiences and enhancing support through tutors and coaches.



For more details, see the: [thematic compendium on the SME projects](#)





A statement by Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO of EUROCHAMBRES



Arnaldo Abruzzini,
CEO, EUROCHAMBRES

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Apprenticeships, along with other forms of work-based learning, are crucial to equip individuals with the skills required by the economy.

Unfortunately, while SMEs represent two-third of private sector employment in Europe, their involvement in apprenticeships is hampered by a lack of human resources, time and knowledge of the relevant legislation and administrative requirements. They therefore need support.

In order to enable a growing number of SMEs to offer apprenticeships, EUROCHAMBRES coordinated the 'Apprenticeship Coaches for SMEs' (AC4SME) project, whereby 26 staff members of the chambers were trained as apprenticeship coaches to help SMEs host apprenticeship trainings in 12 countries. This large-scale European project, funded under the Erasmus+ programme, was based on the exchange of knowledge between chambers. They play a pivotal role in the involvement of SMEs in apprenticeship schemes, not only in countries with well-established VET systems but also in countries where their involvement is underdeveloped or requires improvement.

AC4SME fits perfectly into the EAFA and the network of chambers' shared objective to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships across the EU. This ambitious goal needs to be matched with an adequate budget. Therefore, EUROCHAMBRES calls on the EU institutions and Member States to confirm the Erasmus+ programme's budgetary increase for VET in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), as proposed by the European Commission, and to adopt a post-2020 strategic framework for cooperation on VET that positions work-based learning at the centre of all VET programmes and enhances permeability between general, vocational and higher education pathways.



For more details, see: <https://www.ac4sme.eu/>

EUROCHAMBRES is the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, representing over 20 million businesses in Europe through 46 members and a network of 1 700 regional and local chambers.

Norway's public sector takes action on apprenticeships

The public sector can play a key role in increasing the supply of apprenticeships. Norway's strategy focuses on:

- ▶ recruiting apprentices to the public sector, and
- ▶ using purchasing power to influence suppliers to employ apprentices.

In 2016, the government asked all bodies under its authority to recruit at least one apprentice. At that time, 14 ministries already had their own apprentices. From 2017, new rules on public procurement require that, for contracts worth a minimum of NOK 1.5 million, the government must buy goods and services from companies that are an approved apprenticeship provider. These regulations mainly apply to the building, construction and ICT sectors. Companies from the European Economic Area are treated equally.

According to a 2017 report by the OECD on the costs and benefits of apprenticeships, studies show that linking apprenticeship requirements to public procurement can increase the provision of apprenticeships without negatively impacting the quality of training.

According to the European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE Policy Brief 1/2015), preferential treatment in the awarding of public contracts to firms that provide training can be found in countries like Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.



Support by Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the EU agency in charge of supporting the promotion, development and implementation of EU policies in the field of vocational education and training (VET), as well as skills and qualifications. By working together with the Commission, the Member States and the social partners, Cedefop works to enhance and disseminate knowledge, provide evidence and services for the purpose of policy making, including research-based conclusions, and facilitate knowledge sharing among and between its stakeholders. Within the areas of apprenticeships and work-based learning more generally, Cedefop work is mainly aimed at:

- ▶ Providing structured, comparable information on apprenticeships at country and scheme level in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, through the online [Cedefop European database of apprenticeship schemes](#) (2016 data, update ongoing in 2019).
- ▶ Strengthening and expanding the knowledge on apprenticeship systems and schemes in Europe, through the activation of [Cedefop's community of apprenticeship experts](#).
- ▶ Promoting a cross-nation, comparative analysis of apprenticeship schemes in EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, through its publication '[Apprenticeship schemes in European countries: a cross-nation overview](#)' (2018).
- ▶ Promoting policy learning among apprenticeship stakeholders across Member States, through the EU's [first apprenticeships policy learning forum](#) in 2017 and its [2018 follow up](#).
- ▶ Exploring in-depth aspects of apprenticeship design and provision in EU Member States, through [further extensive focused research](#) on:
 - ▶ the role and use of apprenticeships for qualifying adults in the national contexts and the concepts and approaches used to study the phenomenon of 'adult apprenticeship' (publication forthcoming in 2019),
 - ▶ financing instruments and arrangements applied in EU Members States to finance apprenticeships (publication and online database forthcoming in 2019),
 - ▶ factors enabling the long-term mobility of apprentices (2019, ongoing).
- ▶ Supporting apprenticeship reform in interested Member States [through in-depth country specific reviews of apprenticeship systems](#) and schemes, on the basis of a robust [analytical framework](#). Reports of thematic country reviews (TCRs) are published for Lithuania and Malta (2015), Greece, Italy and Slovenia (2017-2018), Croatia and Cyprus (2019), plus Belgium (French-speaking Community) and Sweden (flash TCRs, 2019).
- ▶ Leading discussions and research on the future of apprenticeships in Europe and the world under the pressure of external mega trends, through the [joint Cedefop and OECD symposium](#) (October 2019) and a forthcoming publication.

- ▶ Monitoring and analysing policy developments related to work-based learning in all its forms, with a special focus on apprenticeships (one of the five priorities agreed in the 2015 Riga Conclusions in the framework of European cooperation in VET), [through cross-country analysis and individual country chapters](#).
- ▶ Providing strategic and expert input to the ET 2020 Working Group on VET (focus on teachers and trainers in work-based learning, and particularly in apprenticeships) working closely with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL).
- ▶ Sharing approaches for analysing and evaluating the design and implementation of work-based learning and apprenticeship policies with the European Commission and other international organisations, including through the inter-agency working group on work-based learning.



For more details, see: [Apprenticeships in work-based learning](#)



Support by the European Training Foundation

The European Training Foundation (ETF) aims at supporting inclusive skills development policies, access to lifelong learning opportunities and innovation targeting skills for the future. It also supports EU institutions to design, monitor and evaluate EU human capital development assistance. The 29 ETF partner countries span the Western Balkans and Turkey, the EU neighbourhood region and Central Asia. The ETF continues to develop its own expertise and knowledge in relation to work-based learning and to develop methodologies, tools and guidance that support the development of work-based learning in different environments through partnerships with multiple actors.

VET and work-based learning in ETF collaborate countries

Many countries face similar challenges in transforming vocational education and training. Improving cooperation between vocational education and training and business is crucial and many countries have taken measures to better align learning to workplace needs. Five candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) are members of EAfA.

What is the ETF doing in partner countries?

In candidate countries, the ETF:

- ▶ facilitates and supports their efforts to contribute actively to EAfA, for example by securing pledges,
- ▶ encourages them to exchange experience and analysis (this entails collaboration among countries in the region but also with EU Member States and businesses),
- ▶ assists them to implement the Riga medium term deliverables,
- ▶ supports the monitoring and analysis of progress for the period 2015-2020,
- ▶ provides expertise and tools, including ex-ante impact assessments of the policy options chosen under Medium Term Deliverable (MTD) 1.

In the Eastern Partnership region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and Kazakhstan, the ETF provides support to the analysis and design of national work-based learning policies. Every year, it organises a regional forum on work-based learning including capacity building, knowledge sharing sessions and field visits.

In the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region, the ETF completed policy reviews on work-based learning in three countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). In close cooperation with UNESCO, a comparative and longitudinal analysis of work-based learning programmes in the Arab region will be published in 2019, covering 8 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia).



For more details, see: etf.europa.eu

Youth organisations and the representation of apprentices

European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum is the platform representing youth organisations in Europe. It strives to empower young people to actively participate in society and to improve their own lives by representing and advocating for their rights. In the current uncertain political and social context, young people can be powerful catalysts for positive change and can contribute to innovative solutions to Europe's problems.

OBESSU

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the cooperation platform for national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. OBESSU represents school students as stakeholders in their educational systems, and in issues concerning their lives. It empowers students to contribute to the development of democratic educational systems that promote active citizenship. Through OBESSU, students also cooperate to develop school student representative structures. These efforts include attention to apprentices and the educational dimension of their experience.

European Apprentices Network

The European Youth Forum and OBESSU are working to ensure the rights of young people in education and the workplace. They have jointly launched a network for apprentices at European level with the support of the European Commission to make sure that the voices of young apprentices are heard in discussions on VET and apprenticeships in Europe. This network promotes quality apprenticeships that put the learner at the centre and respect the rights of young people as students and as workers. Involving young people in decisions that affect them is crucial – the European Apprentices Network (EAN) works to ensure that apprentices are represented in the set-up, design and implementation of apprenticeship programmes.

Representation of apprentices

At national level, there is limited evidence of structures in place to represent apprentices. There is a great diversity of VET systems across Europe. A recent study on the representation of apprentices commissioned by the European Commission aimed to:

- ▶ undertake a mapping of the representation of apprentices in different bodies in EU Member States, candidate countries and EFTA countries,
- ▶ draw conclusions and make recommendations on how representation could be further developed and strengthened at national level and how it could be supported at European level,
- ▶ draw conclusions and make recommendations on how the EAN could further grow to enhance its added value in the relationship between national developments and the European policy debate.

Delivering quality and effective apprenticeships

The European social partners are committed to promote and support quality and effective apprenticeships to facilitate a smooth transition from education and training to the world of work.

With labour shortages and skills mismatches becoming a growing concern in many member states, we believe more than ever that the provision of quality and effective apprenticeships is one of the best pathways to ensure a successful transition from education to work for young people and to help enterprises address their skills needs.

The March 2018 Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships has a strong foundation in the continuous work of the European social partners on apprenticeships. The Recommendation also reflects the Joint Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) and sets the agenda for ongoing and future work at European and national level.

Notably, the criteria outlined in the Council Recommendation address a number of factors that the social partners have previously identified as being characteristic of quality and effective apprenticeships, namely:

- ▶ apprenticeship systems need to be governed with the involvement of social partners and stakeholders in a way that focuses on learning outcomes and employability,
- ▶ the majority of an apprenticeship should take place in an enterprise,
- ▶ apprentices should be paid or compensated in line with national or sectoral minimum requirements or collective agreements,
- ▶ it is necessary to ensure commitment by apprentices, matched by clear benefits including qualifications and job opportunities

Going forward, it is important that European and national efforts are channelled towards the implementation of this recommendation. In this regard, the development of on-demand apprenticeship support services is an important step. In particular, we welcome the adaptation of the benchlearning approach to the apprenticeship context. We believe that this can help to foster the improvement of apprenticeship systems, where needed, through a combination of benchmarking and mutual learning and conducted within a peer review context. European and national social partners can make an important contribution to this process and will actively participate.

We also continue to see a role for the new European Social Fund+ in helping to provide EU financial support for the delivery of apprenticeships, particularly in view of reaching the aim whereby the majority of the training time takes place within an enterprise.

We welcome the proposal to bolster the next Erasmus programme, which should actively continue to support the cross-border mobility of apprentices within Europe and enhance the attractiveness of VET and apprenticeships for young people.

The ACVT's opinion of December 2018 on the future of vocational education and training (VET) highlights the significant role that apprenticeships play in training young people, and identifies this form of training as among the top VET priorities at EU and national levels. As we look beyond 2020, apprenticeships must continue to be at the heart of the VET agenda. As social partners, we remain committed to continuing our work with the EU institutions, national authorities and VET providers in order to further promote the provision of, and participation in, quality and effective apprenticeships



Luca Visentini
General Secretary
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Engagement of European education and training providers

Groups of European VET provider associations (representing initial, continuing and higher level VET) have gathered every year since 2010 for informal meetings with the Commission. In 2015, an expert group 'Platform for European Associations of VET providers' was created and now includes six European associations, including four VET bodies and two higher education bodies.

VET bodies

- ▶ European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EFVET)
- ▶ EU Providers of Vocational Education and Training (EUproVET)
- ▶ European Associations of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)
- ▶ European Vocational Training Association (EVTA)

Higher education bodies

- ▶ European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- ▶ European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)

In 2013, the four VET bodies pledged to help increase apprenticeship take-up – both across Europe and through their national membership organisations. Members contribute to EAfA independently and in partnerships. The partners commit to ensuring stronger and better coordination between learning and business organisations.

EURASHE and EUCEN have also pledged to help to boost quality and increase the number of higher level apprenticeships.

Since 2014, the six bodies have joined forces as part of the VET4EU2 network. The organisations work together, as well as independently, to improve the quality and image of VET. Improving collaboration between VET and higher education is also a priority.

In 2018, the associations jointly prepared a position paper on EU policy after 2020 on vocational education and training.



For more details, see: [Position paper on European Union policy after 2020 on Vocational and Educational Training](#)





Business initiatives

High quality dual training at ŠKODA Academy

ŠKODA AUTO a.s. belongs to the Volkswagen Group. The ŠKODA Academy in Czechia is responsible for the personal development of ŠKODA employees and for the development of their professional and technical skills and competences.

ŠKODA employees are involved in shaping personal development concepts and tools in line with the strategy of the academy. The ŠKODA Academy is also responsible for the technical education of students. The goal of the academy is to link social and technical competences, transfer know-how and ensure that students are ready for their practical training.

To ensure a continued supply of qualified employees, the Vocational School of Mechanical Engineering, which is part of the ŠKODA Academy, trains more than 300 young people per year. This training is delivered according to the dual training principle, combining work and learning with the aim to obtain the different vocational qualifications that the company needs.

Students at the Vocational School of Mechanical Engineering complete three- or four-year courses in technical subjects that lead to either an apprenticeship diploma or a school leaving certificate for university access. The way the technical subjects are taught and the number of places available are both geared towards the needs and requirements of the relevant specialist departments at ŠKODA. The company therefore places great importance on outstanding vocational training with a particular focus on future-oriented technologies. On successful completion, all graduates of the Vocational School of Mechanical Engineering are given the opportunity to work for the Czech car manufacturer.



At ŠKODA, high-quality training and rigorous talent development date back more than 90 years: in 1927, the ŠKODA Academy opened at the company headquarters in Mladá Boleslav. In the first year, 58 students began their training in three different specialist areas. Today, almost 1 000 students – 13 % of which are female – are enrolled in 13 full-time courses and three postgraduate programmes at the ŠKODA Academy. In more than 90 years of its existence, the school has prepared nearly 23 000 graduates for future jobs.

La Poste, as a member of PostEurop, values its apprentices as participants in the Altern'up competition

Carrying strong values in terms of training and insertion of young people into employment, La Poste, France's national postal service company, pursues a dynamic policy regarding work-study students, just like many other PostEurop members. In accordance with its commitments, La Poste renewed its pledge to work-study schemes through the agreement 'A future for every postman' signed in 2015. This agreement provides for the recruitment of at least 12 000 work-study contracts for the period 2016-2018. Each year, young people are trained in a wide variety of qualifications, from professionalisation contracts to Masters' degrees. In 2018, 4 902 young people benefited from an apprenticeship or professionalisation contract.

As part of this policy, La Poste has implemented an initiative to promote the potential of young people in apprenticeships. La Poste and other major French companies (EDF Group, Air France, Sanofi, Thales, Total, Veolia and Siemens) organised the Altern'up competition in 2018 with the Innovation Foundation for Apprenticeships (FIPA).



This competition, which is open exclusively to the students in work-study schemes within these companies, promotes entrepreneurial spirit. Adult employees who are taking part in an apprenticeship or a professionalisation contract and have a business project can also take part in the competition. The competition consists of several stages of selection, first at the company level and then at the national level.

At La Poste, five files were selected to be presented in the national competition, whose jury selected a total of 30 projects for Créativ'Week. During this week, which took place from 25 to 29 June 2018, the candidates were trained in different entrepreneurship fields – such as finance, marketing, law, communication, digital and pitching – and met with entrepreneurs to share their experience.

At the end of the week, each participant had two minutes to pitch his or her business creation project. Ten of them were then selected to participate in the final, held in October.

Mathilde Martinez, a student in a work-study scheme at La Poste, was among the 12 finalists for her 'Mobile Health' project. The awards ceremony took place on November 13 at the top of the EDF tower in Paris, in the presence of representatives of all the event's partner companies. On this occasion, Mathilde, who was one of the five laureates, was awarded the Innovation Prize offered by Thales for her initiative to reinvent paramedical care in rural areas using a local bus.



Basque Country: The key factors for VET excellence

The Basque Country was the first member to join the EAFA from a regional authority. Since 2014, the regional dimension has been reinforced and highlighted under the EU's VET agenda, with positive results with regard to the challenges at European (Smart Specialisation Strategy) and global (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals, etc.) levels and agendas. The regional approach consists of an alliance with all the territorial stakeholders addressing issues such as apprenticeships, skills, specialisation strategies, future jobs, innovation and a better future for our society. More than 40 000 students (5.2 % of the total VET students in Spain in the school year 2017-2018) are enrolled in VET programmes offered in the Basque Country and more than half of VET students are in higher VET (47.7 % in the whole of Spain).

In 2018, the Basque VET Law was adopted and, in 2019, the Basque Government approved the fifth Strategic VET Plan, which is designed to transform VET and to address the challenges of the Industry 4.0 revolution. The Basque Government is strengthening the apprenticeship system in order to accelerate the VET students' skills development, connected to strategic professional sectors in the region. Today, the employability of dual VET apprentices is at 96.2 %, with a rate of female participants of 23.3 %. In 2018-2019, the total number of companies involved was 1 434.

“*The features that make the Basque Country VET system unique, such as supporting high student employability in programmes related to industrial branches, are mainly due to the use of more practical and innovative learning methodologies. The constant support from the regional authorities of teachers, tutors and heads of VET centres, the close links with companies (including SMEs) and innovation are key. The development of cutting-edge training programmes, the visibility and the promotion of their work and the potential for excellence and vanguard specialisations and skills are also central.*”

Jorge Arevalo, Deputy Regional Minister for Vocational Training at the Basque Government

The Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships

The Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – are committed to cooperate on the implementation of VET under the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA), established in Riga in 2015. The cooperation is focused on the priorities of the Riga Conclusions. It was started through an Erasmus+ project supporting national authorities in developing work-based learning (WBL) and apprenticeships in the Baltic States, WBL-Balt, and continued with another Baltic Erasmus+ project, 'Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning' (TTT4WBL).

Four years of cooperation has produced visible results. An increasing number of VET institutions and employers have started to offer WBL, with some of them also joining the EAfA.

Through the Erasmus+ project, the Baltic countries have trained 800 WBL trainers and tutors according to a common methodology – so called 'tandem training' – where VET institutions, together with company trainers and tutors, interactively learn together and develop a common understanding on how WBL should be implemented in the best possible way. Currently, the ministries responsible for education and science in the three Baltic States are discussing a joint competence profile for WBL tutors. This would also contribute to the quality of WBL students and trainer/tutor mobility in the Baltic States.

The Baltic partners have also agreed on further steps within the framework of the BAfA, including a commitment to continue their cooperation and to contribute to the promotion of the Baltic region as an outstanding place for studies and work.



EARLALL: Promoting apprenticeships in the regions

The European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL) is an international non-profit association established in 2001, at the initiative of the Tuscany region and based in Brussels. The association is managed by its members and a board of directors, and currently the Basque Country holds its presidency. In 2019, EARLALL full members included 13 regions in 8 European countries and a considerable number of partner and observer associations involved in education and lifelong learning, representing over 61 million people across Europe.

EARLALL joined the EAfA through a pledge in 2015 (renewed and reinforced in 2018), aiming to utilise its large network to promote apprenticeships across the EU and stimulate apprenticeship mobility. The pledge focuses on increasing the number of high-quality apprenticeships (supply) and cross-border opportunities (mobility). EARLALL has encouraged its members to make pledges, participated in calls for proposals under Erasmus+ and actively participated in all EAfA activities.

As EARLALL's members are regional and local educational authorities, the network is active at policy level through its presence in Brussels and its interaction with the EU institutions, helping the EAfA pledge to benefit from a trickle-down effect. This has already been demonstrated by new pledges promoted by EARLALL member regions, such as the Catalan Chamber of Commerce and an Asturian VET school that chose to become EAfA members in 2016, or the pledge made by the Catalan government's Department of Education in 2017. Furthermore, regional initiatives also have the potential to be scaled up and inspire other levels of governance and stakeholders.

The EAfA has also had a positive influence on the organisation itself. It has been beneficial to EARLALL and its members to have a platform to engage other associations, enterprises and social partners, and this has enabled the exchanges of ideas, approaches and best practices. This has occurred primarily through stakeholder meetings but also thanks to the establishment of independent relationships. Given current political and socio-economic challenges in Europe, EARLALL believes that creating strategic alliances with key stakeholders is of utmost importance and that the EAfA is the right platform to provide this.



For more details, see: www.earlall.eu

Boosting mobility

Mobility of apprentices has emerged as an important topic, joining the EAF's three original objectives to improve supply, quality and image. In particular, the issue of long-term mobility has been receiving increasing attention.

Every year, around 130 000 VET learners benefit from Erasmus+ funding to train abroad. However, we remain a long way from the EU objective that, by 2020, at least 6 % of VET learners in upper secondary education should undertake mobility, and long-term mobility is particularly challenging.

Long-duration mobility

The average duration of VET mobility has shortened in recent years. In the previous Leonardo da Vinci programme (2007-2013), half of all VET placements lasted more than 2 months and 7 % lasted more than 6 months. Since Erasmus+ was launched in 2014, less than 1 % lasted longer than 6 months.

Recent reports by the European Parliament and Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute have therefore called to strengthen long-term mobility. This ambition has also received the support of the business-led 'European Pact for Youth'.

ErasmusPRO

Responding to these calls for action, the Commission put forward a proposal for an ErasmusPRO action under Erasmus+, to support the long-term mobility of apprentices (between 3 and 12 months), aiming to finance up to 50 000 placements by 2020, in addition to the initial Erasmus+ target of 650 000 periods of mobility for VET learners between 2014 and 2020.

Erasmus+

Duration of VET learner mobility 2014-2016:

Less than 1 month	78 %
1-3 months	17 %
3-6 months	4 %
More than 6 months	1 %

European Parliament pilot project

At the European Parliament's request, the Commission launched two calls for proposals (in 2016 and 2017) for projects aimed at improving the long-term mobility of apprentices.

The aim was to test the viability of setting up a European framework for the long-term mobility of apprentices, helping to enhance the skills and employability of young apprentices while strengthening their sense of European citizenship. The lessons learnt from these projects will inform future mobility actions under the next Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027).

Long-term mobility of apprentices

Mobility is important as apprentices gain independence, learn new skills (particularly soft skills), and foreign language skills through international work experience. The companies involved also benefit, as cultural exchange fosters creativity, reinforces the companies' skills base and attracts international talent.

Erasmus+ is the main EU level instrument for promoting the mobility of learners and staff. For three decades, Erasmus+ and its predecessors have had a positive impact on over 9 million Europeans. It has offered opportunities to young people, students and adults to study, train, gain experience and volunteer abroad. In the field of vocational education and training, more than 600 000 students have participated in the programme since 2014. More than 150 000 young people now go abroad every single year. The Erasmus+ mid-term evaluation illustrates that more than 90 % of apprentices are satisfied with their learning mobility abroad.









On 21-22 March 2019, the European Commission and the European Parliament organised a conference on how to promote and support the long-term mobility of apprentices across Europe. It brought together more than 180 participants from various stakeholder groups, such as Erasmus+ national agencies, representatives from the European Parliament pilot project on long-term mobility for apprentices, members of the EAfA and the European Apprentices Network, other youth representatives as well as European and national policymakers. Opened by Jean Arthuis, Member of the European Parliament, and Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, the event provided an opportunity to share experiences and develop recommendations for the mobility of apprentices in Europe.

The conference indicated a number of challenges and recommendations:

Challenges

-  No single European model of apprenticeships
-  Uncertainty about the recognition of mobility as part of the qualifications
-  Existing language barriers and online courses not suited to the needs of apprentices
Practical insurance issues
-  Excessive paperwork
-  Companies' lack of awareness regarding sending and hosting apprentices
-  Gaps in information provided to apprentices (conditions, accommodation, regulations and models, national contact points in the host country, etc.)
-  VET seen as a second choice

Policy recommendations

-  Develop a system to recognise competences and skills acquired abroad
-  Provide effective language support, tailored to apprentices' needs
-  Develop a European-wide insurance scheme for apprentices
-  Simplify and harmonise the administrative processes
-  Invest more in communicating the benefits to companies of apprentice mobility, and develop guidance presenting the benefit of participating in mobility schemes
-  Develop a checklist to ensure apprentices, schools and intermediaries are aware of all practical and legal aspects concerning their mobility scheme
-  Develop a database of facilitators and VET schools
-  Develop a checklist to ensure apprentices are aware of all practical and legal aspects concerning their mobility scheme

Looking ahead, with a proposed budget of € 30 billion, the next Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) will increase cross-border mobility opportunities for VET. By tripling the current figures, it would lead to opportunities abroad for up to 2 million learners and staff in VET. One of the programme's priorities will be to support the long-term mobility opportunities (3-12 months) for VET learners. It will build on the experience acquired through the ErasmusPRO initiative, launched in 2016, as well as on the lessons learnt from the European Parliament pilot project. By 2020, ErasmusPRO will have helped to provide long-term mobility experiences for some 50 000 apprentices.



Overview of funding opportunities

In addition to support for apprenticeship schemes from Member States' national budgets, the EU offers significant funding through several major funds, institutes or schemes.

Erasmus+ provides funding for learning experiences abroad for VET learners, including apprentices, and for teachers and trainers. It also funds strategic partnerships involving education and training providers, social partners and companies, plus policy reform initiatives to strengthen apprenticeship schemes.



For more details, see:

Erasmus+ programme:

ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/

The European Social Fund can be used to support apprenticeship reform at national level and initiatives to boost apprenticeship supply and quality.

Additionally, funding under the Youth Employment Initiative is used to support apprenticeships as direct support targeting young people not in employment, education or training aged 15-24. This funding stream supports regions experiencing youth unemployment rates of over 25 % in the period 2014-2020.



For more details, see:

European Social Fund:

ec.europa.eu/esf

Moreover, under the EURES axis of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), there is funding available for the development of targeted mobility schemes such as 'Your first EURES Job'.



For more details, see:

Your first EURES Job:

ec.europa.eu/eures/public/your-first-eures-job-js

ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirsteuresjob

The European Investment Bank can provide support in the form of loans to the private and public sectors under the programme 'Skills and Jobs - Investing for Youth'.



For more details, see:

European Investment Bank:

www.eib.org

Erasmus+ projects

Apprenticeships and work-based learning

Erasmus+ helps improve apprenticeship systems as part of Key Action 3: Support for policy reform by:

Supporting national authorities for apprenticeships (Call EACEA 13/2014)

9 projects have been completed in 2017

Total budget awarded: € 2.3 million

Supporting SMEs to engage in apprenticeships (Call EACEA 41/2015)

16 projects were funded and implemented between 2016 and 2018

Total budget awarded: € 8.3 million

Fostering VET-business partnerships on work-based learning and apprenticeships (Call EACEA 40/2016)

The projects were selected and started in 2017 and will run until the end of 2019

Joint VET qualifications (Call EACEA/27/2017)

19 projects are being funded and will be implemented between 2018 and 2020

Total budget awarded: € 7.3 million

The programme also helps fund the international mobility of apprentices under Key Action 1 (mobility projects) and promotes partnerships between the VET sector, apprenticeship providers and other stakeholders under Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices.

'Apprenticeship coaches for SMEs'

'Apprenticeship coaches for SMEs (AC4SME)' was a large-scale European project co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme (support for small and medium sized enterprises engaging in apprenticeships), bringing together chambers of commerce and industry from 12 Member States under the coordination of EUROCHAMBRES. The objective of the project was to involve a growing number of SMEs in apprenticeships. It also helped to improve the capacity of chambers to support SMEs in hosting apprentices to create a network of apprenticeship coaches for SMEs in the EU.

The results of the project were manifold and include a number of publications related to SME skills analysis, the creation of a network of apprenticeship coaches and the development of two toolboxes.

The project partners also agreed on policy recommendations to relevant stakeholders on how to address the low engagement of SMEs in apprenticeships.



Reference tools

Apprenticeship toolbox

Austria, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland have worked together to develop a digital apprenticeship toolbox. The five countries are well known for the quality of their dual training systems. While these systems have similar features, apprenticeships are delivered in different ways. The toolbox provides a comparative, searchable and structured overview of the five apprenticeship systems. Covering areas of apprenticeship governance and regulations, the role of social partners and companies, financing arrangements, programmes and pathways design, VET standards and qualifications matching, training and teaching, as well as attractiveness and excellence, the toolbox provides comprehensive resources for policy learning, experimentation and development. The project supports the objectives of the EAfA and was co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme.



Apprenticeship Toolbox

Work-based learning toolkit

This toolkit was developed by the 29 Erasmus+ National Agencies that together formed the NetWBL – the European Thematic Network on Work-Based Learning. Searchable by theme, type of resource, language, type of education and target group, the NetWBL toolkit provides easy access to a wide range of resources on apprenticeship governance and management, development and delivery, assessment and recognition, evaluation and quality assurance, partnerships, as well as information and communication activities. It also provides access to a database of projects that have contributed examples and resources to the NetWBL toolkit. This includes further access to their websites and tools. The NetWBL and its toolkit were co-funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme.



Work-based learning toolkit

ILO guide and tools for quality apprenticeships

The 'Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeship – Vol. 1: Guide for Policy Makers' was published by the ILO at the end of 2017. It provides information, tools and examples for policymakers who seek to improve the quality of apprenticeship systems and programmes. The first volume of the ILO toolkit presents good practice examples from ILO tripartite constituents around the world, and offers a practical guide to developing quality apprenticeship systems. The second volume, to be published in 2019, will target practitioners: HR managers, representatives of trade unions, VET providers as well as local or sectoral support services employees. It will help practitioners to design, implement and monitor quality apprenticeship programmes by providing practical tools, templates and step-by-step guidance. A project supported by the European Commission contributed to the first publication.



ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships – Vol. 1: Guide for Policy Makers

Apprenticeship programmes funded through the European Social Fund



Greece: 'Post-Lyceum Year - Apprenticeship Class in Greece'

The new 'Post-Lyceum Year - Apprenticeship Class in Greece' programme became a reality in 2017 with the support of the ESF (currently, approximately € 40 million is allocated for implementing apprenticeships). It is based on the legal framework set by Law 4186/2013, which introduced, inter alia, a dual system by establishing the 'apprenticeship class' as a fourth optional year of study for vocational senior high school (EPAL) graduates.

The Ministry of Education launched the cornerstone of the new apprenticeship system in February 2017, following two ESF-funded pilots in 2016. The ESF supported approximately 1 100 EPAL graduates of seven areas of specialisation that were not in education, employment or training up to the age of 24.

The apprenticeship class lasts 9 months, consists of 7 hours of in-class teaching and features a workplace learning element (four days per week, 28 hours) based in public and private sector companies. Participation leads to a level 5 EQF qualification (after completing a specific accreditation procedure). The remuneration of the apprentice amounts to 75 % of the daily minimum wage (€ 17.12), and the apprentice receives the same benefits as the working force (i.e. full social security coverage).

In November-December 2017, the programme expanded and the ESF provided support to approximately 3 100 EPAL graduates as apprentices in companies in the private and public sector. A third round was launched in November-December 2018 in which the ESF supported around 3 700 additional EPAL graduate apprentices.

There is a steady increase in the number of apprentices (+231 % more than the 'school' year 2016-2017), as well as an increase in the areas of specialisation (from 6 in 2016-2017 to 21), the number of schools (49 % more than 2016-2017), and the number of apprenticeship classes (128 % more than 2016-2017). The ratio of positions between the private and public sector has also increased from 1:3 to 1:2 respectively in the latest cycle.



Slovakia: Introduction of a dual vocational education and training scheme

A dual vocational education and training (VET) scheme was introduced in 2015 as a part of global reform of the VET system, aiming at making VET more relevant to the labour market. Its introduction in practice has been supported and tested by an ESF-funded project called 'Dual education and increasing quality and popularity of VET', which will end in November 2020. Under the framework of the project, which has an overall budget of € 33.6 million, an estimated 12 000 students from 280 VET schools will follow a dual education programme, allowing them to undertake the practical part of their training at a workplace of 1 450 employers. The project will help shape a sustainable dual VET scheme which will then be integrated into the Slovak education system. The project also aims to make dual education more attractive to schools, employers and learners.



Spain: Dual VET training programme in Andalusia

2 225 people participated in a dual VET training programme in Andalusia in 2016-2018. Combining an apprenticeship in a company and training in an educational centre, such programmes allow participants to acquire both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed in the workplace. These programmes provide participants with a much-needed first work experience in their field while also allowing companies to get to know and train potential future staff members. The costs related to training provision, follow-up of the apprenticeship by the pedagogical team, participation in the apprenticeship and the apprenticeship itself are co-financed. Several dual VET training formats exist throughout the region and the rest of the country.

Mobility portals

EURES – European job mobility portal

EURES is an online platform and network of over 1 000 advisers from national public employment services (PES) that help jobseekers with finding a job in Europe. The EURES portal lists more than 3.5 million vacancies, over 450 000 CVs of registered users and 14 500 employers. This, and the support of EURES advisers, allows the service to match jobseekers with employers across Europe. Since 2018, apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities that offer a work contract have been published on the EURES portal, giving learners easy access to information on training opportunities in other European countries. Drop'pin@EURES is a specific area on the portal dedicated to youth opportunities, including apprenticeships and traineeships.



ec.europa.eu/eures

eTwinning

eTwinning is a free platform and an online community for schools where European teachers and students can connect, discuss and collaborate. The platform has engaged around 700 000 teachers and 190 000 schools in over 90 000 projects. It offers eTwinning news in 28 languages; 'support kits' for project development; information on recognition of eTwinning outcomes; online search for eTwinning schools, projects and activities; and free self-assessment tools and materials for educators. Launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's e-learning programme, eTwinning has since been integrated into Erasmus+. eTwinning applies the concept of 'internationalisation at home', referring to activities that enable students to gain an international experience in the classroom and online without going abroad; not as a substitute for classic mobility, but as part of the broader internationalisation of VET schools in Europe.



etwinning.net



Showcasing talent through the EAfA Awards, 2016 to 2018

Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, presented the first ever EAfA Awards at the closing ceremony of European Vocational Skills Week on 9 December 2016. The awards recognised outstanding achievements in the area of apprenticeships by companies and their apprentices.

2016 winners

Company	Petronor, Spain
Apprentice	Megan Niven, UK (Nielsen) Lewis Churchill, UK (IBM Europe)

2017 winners

Large Enterprises	ENEL , Italy
SME	Schleiff Bauflächentechnik GmbH & Co, Germany
Micro-enterprises	Drury Joinery Services, UK
Apprentice	Hannah Colston, UK (Trojan Group)
Teacher	Angeliki Filippidou, Greece
Trainer	Véronique Morelle, France

2018 winners

Large Enterprises	ESB Networks DAC, Ireland
Small Enterprises	Atelier du Pain, France
Apprentice	Domenico Calabrese, Italy (ENEL)

Key topics for future years

Apprenticeships for adults

In the context of initial education and training (IVET), apprenticeships are normally conceived as a learning opportunity for young people and are therefore often underdeveloped as a learning opportunity for adult learners. While there are some exceptions, for example in Finland, Italy, and the UK, an increased knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships as a distinctive form of learning irrespective of age is needed.

During the European Vocational Skills Week in Helsinki, the meeting of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) focused on apprenticeships for adults. The aim was to share experiences, identify solutions and develop recommendations on how to make apprenticeships accessible to all people at different stages of life, taking into account their specific needs and contexts.

Gender equality

The EU has made significant progress in gender equality over recent decades. Encouraging trends include the higher number of women in the labour market and their progress in securing better education and training. However, gender gaps remain, and therefore gender equality including gender balance continues to be an important topic for the EAfA.

Some EAfA members, like the company EVN Macedonia from North Macedonia and the Italian VET provider FORMA.Azione, have demonstrated their commitment to gender balance in VET through various measures. At European level, the jury of the annual EAfA awards is asked to take into account a gender-balanced approach when selecting the nominees. Furthermore, one of the key priorities of the European Apprentices Network is non-discrimination, which includes combating gender stereotypes affecting the promotion and take-up of apprenticeship placements.



For more information, see: [European Commission's gender equality strategy 2016-2019](#)

Digitalisation

Rapid digital change coupled with the emergence of new technologies and digital skills needs are at the forefront of challenges and opportunities for the EAfA. In May 2019, a meeting of the EAfA in Czechia focused on the role of chambers of commerce, industry and crafts in the transition from school to work. A particular emphasis was put on innovation, digitalisation and robotisation, which are changing the way that businesses work, demanding new types of skills and continuous training. The meeting was an opportunity to learn from best practices in Czechia. The Czech Chamber of Commerce, for example, liaises directly with VET providers and schools to develop curricula adapted to the needs of companies, particularly those working in innovative sectors such as drones and aviation, cybersecurity, virtual reality and smart homes.

Since 2018, the new ET 2020 Working Group on Innovation and Digitalisation in VET has been dedicated to the identification of good practices and design policy recommendations. In 2017, a successful exchange was held between the EAfA and the previous ET 2020 VET Working Group on Teachers and Trainers on apprenticeships in the digital age. This exchange showcased pioneering examples from EAfA member companies, including Volkswagen, with its digital campus to support the integration of digitalisation in VET, and the German multinational software corporation SAP, which provides financial support and software products for the Industry 4.0 'Learning Factories'.

Looking ahead, a large-scale EAfA conference is planned on the theme of digitalisation for the fifth edition of the European Vocational Skills Week, taking place under the German Presidency of the Council of the EU in November 2020.

Integration of migrants using VET systems

Some of the EAfA members include a specific component related to the integration of migrants and refugees in their pledge. This section presents three examples of such projects.



Austrian Federal Economic Chamber – WKÖ

Around 30 000 recognised refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are registered as unemployed in Austria, 60 % of them are located in Vienna. At the same time, the number of vacant apprenticeships that cannot be filled is increasing – particularly in the federal states of Western Austria.

The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber initiated the cross-regional apprenticeship services project 'b.mobile' in cooperation with the Public Employment Service and the Federal Ministries of Economy and Labour. This project will combine the supply and demand in the apprenticeship market all over Austria.

Young refugees are prepared in the most appropriate way for their new position (German, mathematics, practical training, intercultural competences). Refugees and companies have the opportunity to get to know each other during a one-week internship. Throughout this process, the young people are supported by an apprenticeship coach, who can provide both professional and private advice. The apprenticeship coach also provides support to the companies before and during the apprenticeship period.



The Danish Construction Association – Dansk Byggeri

The Danish pledge clearly addresses the issue of migrants. It aims to increase opportunities for refugees to enter the labour market and, in turn, provide construction companies with an increased supply of skilled labour. Tripartite initiatives have paved the way for legislation on the labour market integration of refugees and migrants, allowing for quick access to employment (within two weeks newcomers are placed in companies). Current initiatives in the construction sector focus on breaking down cultural barriers for sustainable integration as skilled workers in the companies.



European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning – EARLALL

Under the Erasmus+ strategic partnership ‘New talents for companies – Developing the potentials of immigrants and refugees (TALENTS)’, several European regions and cities work on local initiatives aimed at improving the job market integration of third-country nationals. Besides EARLALL, project partners also include education centres in Gothenburg (Sweden), Offenburg (Germany) and Oslo (Norway) as well as partners from Graz (Austria) and the University of Florence (Italy). The starting point of this strategic partnership was the ‘Hotel Talents’ project of the City of Gothenburg, which combines job-specific language learning with the acquisition of vocational skills and apprenticeships, involving schools, regional and local authorities, and companies. Project partners have developed this model and transferred it to other European regions.



For more information, see: www.talentseuproject.com

Studies and reports

European Commission

[Teachers and Trainers Matter, How to support them in high-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning - 12 policy pointers, Report of the ET2020 Working Group, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2018](#)

[Teachers and trainers in work-based learning/apprenticeships, Study, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2017](#)

[High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles, 2015](#)

[Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU 27: Key Success Factors, 2013](#)

[Return on investment of apprenticeship systems for enterprises: Evidence from cost-benefit analyses, 2013](#)

[Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2012](#)

Cedefop

[Apprenticeships for adults. Results of an explorative study, 2019 \(forthcoming\)](#)

[Cedefop analytical framework for apprenticeships, 2019 edition](#)

[Outcomes of Cedefop's second policy learning forum \(PLF\) on apprenticeships, 2018](#)

[Apprenticeship schemes in European countries: a cross-nation overview, 2018](#)

[Outcomes of Cedefop's first policy learning forum \(PLF\) on apprenticeships, 2017](#)

[Research paper n° 53 – Governance and financing of apprenticeships, 2016](#)

[Briefing note – Making apprenticeships work for small and medium enterprises, 2015](#)

[Information note – Work-based learning: apprenticeships, Italy, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Greece, 2015](#)

[Working document – Legal acts for VET regulating apprenticeships: Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, 2015](#)

[Cedefop – thematic country reviews : Belgium – French speaking community, 2019 \(forthcoming\); Cyprus, 2019 \(forthcoming\); Croatia, 2019; Sweden, 2018; Greece, 2018; Slovenia, 2017; Italy, 2017; Lithuania, 2015; Malta, 2015](#)

ETF

European cooperation in VET: one process, many stops - Developments in vocational education and training policy 2015–17, Cedefop and ETF, 2018

Reforms in vocational education and training in ETF partner countries: A cross-country digest of reform implementation and risks, 2018

Work-based learning: A handbook for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, 2018 update

Work-based learning: Benefits and obstacles. A literature review for policy makers and social partners in ETF partner countries, 2013

European Parliament

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Dual education: a bridge over troubled waters? Research Institutes, 2014

Success factors for the Dual VET system: Possibilities for know-how-transfer, Institut für Bildungsfragen der Wirtschaft (ibw), 2014

ETUC

A European Framework for Apprenticeships, 2016

Business Europe

A European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships - a BusinessEurope position paper, 2018

A Shared Vision for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning, Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) addressed to the European Commission, 2016

The cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes – making the business case for apprenticeships, 2016

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SMEunited position on Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeship, position paper, 2018

ILO

Tools for Quality Apprenticeships: a Guide for Enterprises, ILO/IOE, 2019

Quality Apprenticeships: Addressing skills mismatch and youth unemployment, 2019

Measuring the costs and benefits of apprenticeship training, 2019

ILO Survey Report on the National Initiatives to Promote Quality Apprenticeships in G20 Countries, 2018

ILO toolkit for quality apprenticeships. Volume I: Guide for policy makers, 2017

OECD Publications

Seven Questions about Apprenticeship: Answers from International Experience, Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, 2018

Striking the right balance: Costs and benefits of apprenticeship, OECD Education Working Papers, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2017

Work-based Learning for Youth at Risk: Getting Employers on Board, OECD Education Working Papers, OECD Publishing, Paris. 2016

Building Stronger Pathways to Work: the Role of Quality Apprenticeships, Issues paper prepared for the 2nd G20-OECD Conference on Promoting Quality Apprenticeships. Antalya, 2015

Bertelsmann Foundation

European Case Study - Cooperation in action: the dual vocational training system in Germany, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016

Germany's dual vocational training system: a model for other countries?, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013

Ejemplos prácticos en el ámbito de la Tutoría de empresa en la FP Dual, Fundacion Bertelsmann, 2019

Glossary

ACVT

Advisory Committee on Vocational Training

C-VET

Continuing vocational education and training

Cedefop

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

EAfA (or 'Alliance')

European Alliance for Apprenticeships

EPAL

From the Greek term for 'Vocational Lyceum'

ESF

European Social Fund

ET 2020

Education and Training 2020 strategy

ETF

European Training Foundation

I-VET

Initial vocational education and training

MFF

Multiannual financial framework

OBESSU

Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions

SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises

TCR

Thematic country reviews

VET

Vocational education and training

WBL

Work-based learning

Join the Alliance!

By joining the EAfA, you can become part of a community of experts from across Europe working to improve the effectiveness and quality of apprenticeships.

The EAfA is a multi-stakeholder platform that aims to promote the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships, as well as the mobility of apprentices in Europe.

The achievements of the EAfA are delivered through national and regional government commitments and voluntary pledges by EAfA stakeholders.

The European Commission, assisted by the Apprenticeship Support Services, facilitates networking, knowledge sharing and learning among EAfA members and experts.

Become an EAfA member and benefit from:

- ▶ access to state-of-the-art knowledge on apprenticeships,
- ▶ information on apprenticeship best practices in Europe,
- ▶ a Europe-wide partner search, networking and mutual learning,
- ▶ the latest news and most effective tools for quality apprenticeships!

Your pledge

When you join the EAfA, you commit to:

- ▶ increasing the supply, quality and/or image of apprenticeships or mobility of apprentices,
- ▶ providing information on the progress of your commitment or pledge once every two years,
- ▶ sharing your experience and good practices with other EAfA members and the public,
- ▶ learning from other members and experts on how to improve the quality of apprenticeships.

Benefits of the Alliance

Learning

Share and learn from experiences and best practices

Tools

Guidelines, practical tools and resources in one online library

Networking

European network of apprenticeship experts and peers

Visibility

Visibility and publicity for your work among peers and European Commission

Information

News, reports, meetings, workshops, events and funding

Training

Webinars, online training modules and live discussions

How to join

To become an EAfA member, make a short pledge describing your planned actions on apprenticeships. These should be linked to the four objectives of the EAfA and could include: upscaling your existing apprenticeship offer (for example, by increasing supply of apprenticeship places, launching a new partnership or scheme, or providing apprenticeships in a new country); promoting the quality, awareness or attractiveness of apprenticeships; or supporting the mobility of apprentices in Europe or another activity. You should consider how the EAfA could help your work and how your pledge will contribute to the objectives of the Alliance.

Get in touch

To find out more about the EAfA, visit our website or get in touch via social media or email.

 ec.europa.eu/apprenticeships-alliance  empl-eafa@ec.europa.eu

 [#ApprenEU](https://twitter.com/ApprenEU)

 [EAfA - European Alliance for Apprenticeships](https://www.linkedin.com/company/EAfA-European-Alliance-for-Apprenticeships)



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Learn. Anywhere. Anytime

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#MySocialEurope photo competition 2019

This publication is the third edition of a series of brochures focused on the achievements and successes of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA), launched in 2013. The Alliance brings together stakeholders in employment and education to address the challenges and possible answers of how to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships in Europe. The brochure features examples of successful and inspiring apprenticeship and other work-based learning policy initiatives and projects across the EU, as well as explaining future plans to build on the work of the Alliance in the coming years.



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