



23rd May 2014, Brussels

Apprenticeship Seminar Minutes

The EU position

Ulrike Storost DG EMPL – Apprenticeships and the Youth Guarantee

Ms Storost stated that the number of 15-29 year olds in apprenticeships varies across the member states but 9.4 million apprenticeships are currently being offered in the EU as a whole. She highlighted how apprenticeship schemes help the transition between school and work and that the crucial characteristic of them is the alternating element between training and work. Ms Storost explained that the Alliance for Apprenticeships endeavours to improve the image, supply and quality of apprenticeships by targeted knowledge transfer, spotlights on the benefits and smart use of EU programmes. The Commission is currently contacting national authorities to find out about the schemes that they have in place and determine the key success factors of these.

The Alliance was launched in July 2013 and a Council Declaration on this was announced in October 2013. 21 Member States have now made commitments to the Alliance and they have received 30 pledges from social partners, chambers, VET providers, etc... The DG for Employment welcomes discussions from different stakeholders and does not just want it to be the Commission saying what should be done. A mutual learning monitoring and evaluation seminar was also organised. Different Member States have different aims and plans in place: for example Lithuania aims to double their work-based VET by 2020 and Germany has entered into bilateral agreements with 6 member States.

The DG Employment has taken a number of actions to assist and promote apprenticeships schemes: a helpdesk has been set up and is accessible online, the EURES platform offers apprenticeship placements, the European Semester serves as an instrument and apprenticeship is currently been integrated into the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans. The Youth Guarantee is being monitored: all the 28 Member States have committed and most have submitted concrete plans that are being monitored by the European semester. Apprenticeships are reflected in the youth guarantee plans from Member States but it is important that they lead to nationally

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recognized qualifications and that structural reforms take place to prevent unemployment in the mid to long term.

The challenges that exist are:

- Strong partnerships between ministries are needed
- The quality of the schemes needs to be high and be monitored
- The schemes should link to the need of the labour market. The role of social partners is essential in this
- Monitoring and evaluation is important
- Targeting drop outs vs employers needs
- Adapted to individuals vs institutional VET cycles
- A long term approach needs to be taken.
- Funding – requires both European Social Funding and national funding

Felix Rohn DG EAC – Erasmus + opportunities for apprenticeships

Mr Rohn emphasised that the Alliance for Apprenticeship establishes common guiding principles. He set out some of the things that the alliance has done during 2014: the ET2020 working group on VET, an apprenticeship call, a conference organised by Cedefop, the European Business Forum on VET 2014 and continuous monitoring by Cedefop.

Mr Rohn specializes in the Erasmus+ programme and his presentation focused on this. Apprentices are explicitly mentioned as eligible participants of Erasmus+. One of the VET priorities is developing partnerships between education and employment. The focus here is on mobility, cooperation between organisations and institutions and policy support. Concerning mobility, VET traineeships are offered abroad from 2 weeks to 12 months. These placements take place in a work place. There is a quality framework relating to the learning outcomes and learning agreement that must be set out and the traineeship and any qualifications from it should be validated and recognized. Those who have qualified within the last year can also participate in this scheme but individuals cannot apply directly for a grant. If the person is living abroad for more than one month they will also obtain a grant for linguistic preparation.

The aims of strategic partnerships in VET are to increase the labour market relevance of learning provision and qualifications and to promote the involvement of local and regional authorities in the qualitative development of education and training. The Commission believes that apprenticeships are a qualitative process. Eligible

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organisations for this are enterprises, inter-company training centres, companies providing shared training etc.

The Sector Skills Alliances monitor responsiveness of IVET and CVT to sector specific labour market needs notably at local and regional levels.

The Erasmus+ programme guide can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

Best Practice

Georgette Bréard – Vice President in charge of lifelong learning and apprenticeship, Brittany Region

Brittany has introduced a learning contract which is a work contract that is open-ended and lasts for 1 to 3 years. It is a dual contract of apprenticeship but also professionalisation in order to bring both of these types of contract together. These contracts are aimed at people who are under 26 but they can be for older people too. The Learning Contract allows students to graduate with a recognised qualification of which there are different levels depending on the type of work undertaken. The company involved in the contract pays for the training but there is a learning tax to fund part of it. Training centres may be funded by the professional sector. It is important that the development of the training courses is done on the basis of labour market needs and with the involvement of the social partners.

Brittany's 3 main priorities are:

- Match the training offered with the labour market needs
- Improve the quality of training and promote continuous training approach
- Support youngsters and families to ensure that they are ready to undergo the learning process whilst encouraging employers to focus on apprenticeship as a way to develop their sectors.

Brittany's approach for improving the quality of training:

- Better support youngsters to prevent drop outs
- Assist youngsters to reflect on jobs and obstacles to the labour market
- Enhance and promote apprenticeships as a training path that allows young people to be trained properly. Organise training events to help this.

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- Improve conditions of apprenticeships through better equipment, resources, buildings, teaching etc
- Aim to accommodate young people in proper accommodation, making the apprentice's life easier by keeping expenditures as low as possible and the commute short.
- Consider a second accommodation close to the company and the schools – this is currently being negotiated with the public bodies
- Promote mobility of apprenticeships
- Encourage employers to hire young people to help them become well prepared when entering the labour market.
- Aim for young people to be able to take up entrepreneurship
- Grant assistance to companies with less than 20 employees. Funding is more important for SME's in order to promote apprenticeships

Currently there are about 18,000 apprentices every year in about 39 apprentice centres and approximately 15,000 companies. There has been a slight decrease of apprenticeships in first level qualifications and a slight increase in higher level. This is believed to be down to the greater level of thought and commitment that goes into the consideration of taking up an apprenticeship at the higher level. Steel and metal take a lot of apprenticeships.

A national level investment programme has been set up to promote the work study programme. 500 million euros has been allocated throughout France for projects with an educational purpose. The aim is to reach 500,000 apprenticeships in France. At the moment there are 420,000. This is difficult due to many companies being reluctant to hire young people and the fact that some companies have been forced to reduce their activity due to the economy.

Rolf Ackerman – Ministry for Culture, youth and sport, Baden-Württemberg

The unemployment rate in Baden-Württemberg is 4.1%, 3% below the national average. Every educational level is connected and a certificate in one level can lead you on to various areas of the next.

The Dual VET system that they have in place is therefore proving very successful. A person spends 3-3.5 years in the dual system, 30% of their time is spent at a vocational school and 70% is company based training. This training is taking place in 339 professions in Baden-Württemberg and involves a combination of theory and practice. Close cooperation with the economic partners ensures that VET takes care of the

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employment and labour market needs. The system prepares young people for employment and lifelong learning. Experts from the industries involved develop training regulations and in company training plus have meetings and cooperate with the federal state. The industries are therefore very involved in the training of the young people. There are currently 190,730 trainees taking part in this dual system.

Ramon Martinez de Murgia – Training and Learning Director, Department of education, language policy and culture, Basque Country

The Basque Country has a system of VET through apprenticeships. On this scheme time is split between a training centre and in company experience with at least 3 months having to be spent in a company before the training course can be finalised. This current model of learning and dual system has been being worked on over the last 3 years. The system is quite similar to Baden-Wurtemberg's but on a smaller scale due to fewer inhabitants. The aim is to improve employability of youth and provide specialised training courses. The objectives are similar to France and Germany and are targeted at 16-30 year olds who are registered at the Basque Employment Service.

In order for the system to be successful they require interested companies who have the resources for trainees to learn; training designed by VET training centres in collaboration with companies; a framework of qualifications; and subsidies from the department of education. Trainees receive a certified training certificate on completing the scheme.

From the first year to the second year the Basque Country doubled the number of companies and trainees involved in the scheme. Their aim is now 3000 trainees. It is vital that companies understand this new culture of learning and the importance of taking part. The Basque Country is trying to work on this, they are keen to cooperate with interested regions and share experiences.

Mr Martinez de Murgia informed the conference that a congress is being held in St Sebastian in the Basque Country on the 28th May 2014 focused on VET and with representation from Cedefop. He invited anyone who was interested to attend or to get in touch for more information.

José Antonio Martin Soler – Vice-Director General for Programmes, Training and Innovation, Catalunya

Catalunya is a self-governed state that has competence over many educational aspects. The apprenticeship system currently in place has been being worked on for the last 2

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and half years. In the first year 590 placements were found, in the second 2116 and it is predicted the overall figure for the third year will be 3590 placements. VET education runs alongside mainstream schools for people between the ages of 16-18. A professional certificate is then awarded to these people with no qualification. Catalunya have been working with companies and trade unions to incorporate everything and to involve people taking part in VET in internships within companies. Their dual system has evolved from this. Their main challenge has been and still is overcoming the bad image that exists of VET.

The Dual VET system lasts about 2 years usually and provides academic recognition for training done within companies. An agreement is drawn up giving the company involved certain responsibilities and the school or training centre others. 130,000 students have taken part mostly through distance learning but in September the figure will hopefully stand at 3500 trainees involved in this dual system since its creation 3 years ago. It is a new productive model with greater innovation and added value. It provides quality production and services. VET attractiveness needs to be increased, as does VET prestige, youth employment and companies participation.

Gabriele Grondoni – Director Training and Guidance Sector, Tuscany Region

The system in Tuscany is aimed at trainees who are in higher level training and then all the vocational training sector. The average length of training is 3 years. There is a requirement for a tutor in the company to support the trainee throughout and there is provision in the training contract for the company to end the traineeship. It can be extended or ceased after the 3 years are up. The 2 main characteristics of this type of training is technical training and collective agreements.

The training programme is tailored for the individual and there is a catalogue of training actions that can be utilised when searching for something appropriate. Unfortunately there is not enough funding to cover all training courses. The amount is set by the state and then spent by the regions. 120 hours of training is the maximum required over the 3 year period but the higher the level of certificate the lower the number of hours.

Tuscany has decided to do distance learning and have created a learning device called Trio to assist with training.

There are more than 20,000 of these training contracts and the funding from the state is not enough to cover all of these.

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Tuscany has attempted to standardize the framework because the system is quite fragmented.

The prospect of in company training is a possibility if the training can be supervised, well-equipped and allow for follow up. Companies must have the right competences and skilled people so their involvement is essential. All of the companies involved are registered in a guidance book online and this shows what students who have taken part in each company through this scheme have achieved.

The people of Italy do not currently see the positivity in VET training and this attitude needs to change.

Pietro Viotti – Department of Education, VET and Labour, Piemonte Region

Mr Viotti focused his presentation on high level learning processes at university level. To be eligible for access to higher level apprenticeships a person must be between the age of 18 and 29 and hold an appropriate educational/academic certificate. This learning pathway has been developed to match national education standards with the requirement of companies and to join the academic and the business world. This contract is an open-ended labour contract and the main focus is on employment. The idea of this scheme was to fill the gaps that were identified at a national level. There is increased understanding between social partners and educational bodies.

88.6% of the apprentices who have undertaken this scheme have completed their contract and of these 94.9% stayed in employment after finishing the contract.

Bodil Englund – Project Manager, Jamtland

The presentation from Jamtland focused on apprenticeships for adults. In 2011 a form of an apprenticeship system was delivered in Sweden with the goal of finding a high quality model for the next 20 years. This adult apprenticeship project has been successful so attention now has to be turned to higher education in order to try and reduce the high youth unemployment levels and dropout rates.

Within the apprenticeship scheme put in place matching the right apprentice with the right skills to the most appropriate business is a high priority because there are a lot of SME's in the region. It is essential to find out the past experience of the apprentice in order to do this and because the apprenticeships offered are very individualized.

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Jamtland work closely with the apprentices, offering them support and follow ups ideally twice a month. Evaluations are completed about halfway through the apprenticeship and at the end when a certificate is obtained. The idea is to secure employment after this scheme has finished or some participants go on to become sole traders.

80% of the people involved in this project go further in one way or another. The rapid changes that are foreseen in the future require training and education to become more flexible. Apprenticeships are very important for this and should be promoted.

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