



**WP3: PRECONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPRENTICESHIP IN THE
RETAIL VET SYSTEM IN BULGARIA, ITALY, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL**

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

May 2014

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1. The context of apprenticeship in the retail trade sector

The development of apprenticeship involves a wide range of different contextual factors. Apprenticeship and work based learning usually depends on the structure of economy, the role played by the big companies and small and medium enterprises, labour market demand for skills, social partnership models and other factors. All these contextual factors have specificities in the countries with different pathways of socio-economic and cultural development.

The apprenticeship context in the retail trade sector in Italy, Basque country (Spain), Portugal and Bulgaria has the following common features:

1) Domination of small and medium enterprises in the sector. It implies certain difficulties in the development of apprenticeship due to lower financial and economic capacity and potential of such enterprises to implement apprenticeship, as well as strong competition among SMEs based on prices and low labour costs. On the other hand, the domination of small and medium size enterprises creates the need to establish different networks of cooperation and partnership to respond to the challenges of skills shortage in the sector. This trend is favourable for the development of apprenticeship.

2) Flexibility of employment patterns in the sector. The retail trade sector in all partner countries is flexible and open to employment and self-employment of different groups, including vulnerable groups, in the labour market, such as youth (in Italy) and migrants (Basque country in Spain). Flexibility of employment is favourable for the development of apprenticeship because flexible employment regimes also require more flexible and workplace oriented or based learning and training. In this way apprenticeship receives more support from the main stakeholders and enterprises of the sector, especially from the side of employers and trade unions.

3) Domination of medium and low skilled jobs in the sector, implying higher instability of employment. This feature of the sector has different implications to the development of apprenticeship. On the one hand, it is favourable for short-term and low-cost apprenticeship schemes based on the quick provision of the basic workplace related know-how and skills. On the other hand, it precludes implementation and development of solid dual apprenticeships that require bigger involvement and investments from different stakeholders.

The differences in the context of retail trade in the partner countries reveal several important factors. Increasing differentiation of retail trade services and orientation to innovation-based competition

strategies in the Basque country imply increasing demand for new skills and qualifications in the sector and this condition is favourable for the development of apprenticeship. Increasing digitalization of sales processes in this country may have different effects on apprenticeship. When digitalization enhances the development of new work processes and of the need for new competences, it is favourable for apprenticeship. If digitalization takes the form of Digital Taylorism it may only enhance short-term and only workplace-based apprenticeship providing basic vocational skills.

The internationalisation of the trade sector activities in Portugal and increasing trade relationships with Portuguese speaking countries create the demand for new skills and competences that can be satisfied with the apprenticeship training schemes.

Italy:

Strong influence of small and medium enterprises and important regional disparities in the development of retail trade companies:

Italy is the country with a much lower – below 40% – market share of the top ten distributors compared to all other European countries; the European average about 80%. In analogy with other indicators of the structure of our economy, the very content of the degree of concentration in the retail trade hides very marked diversity at the local level. The north-central regions where the penetration of large retailers has been more intense, especially in the past decade, contrasts with the area of the South, where the presence of large commercial distribution turns out to be smaller on average, although in moderate growth in recent years.

Legal regulation of the retail trade business in some cases limits its development.

There is also a noticeable positive influence of the retail trade sector to employment growth. The total of workers employed in commercial distribution sector is approximately 1.4million (600 000 people are employed in large retail chains, called "GDO"). However, as a result of the economic recession, the sector has undergone a significant reduction in employment and had to resort to the imposition of short-time work schemes.

Employment in the sector shifted more to part-time work and flexible working hours. The economic crisis has prompted the social partners to change their priorities favouring the introduction of

mechanisms to safeguard employment in periods of economic recession and giving, in general, less weight to the contractual issues relating to the conditions of job.

The sector is characterized by a high proportion of low-qualified labour, the strong presence of female workers (60%) and part-time work. The workforce is relatively young, 30% of employees are in fact younger than 30.

Spain (Basque country):

Domination and strong influence of small and medium retail trade companies in the economy of the region.

The following trends of change in retail trade sector are distinguished in the Basque Country (Spain):

The decrease in sales, due to the economic recession (40% decrease in the sector's sale compared to 2008, when the crisis started) has made the consumer more demanding when shopping and for this reason the differentiation in the customer service, advice, and caring for the shopping experience, is the key factor that can lead to a sale.

A shift to innovation-based competition strategies and putting into practice creative strategies that make a difference, and qualify our entrepreneurs and their workforce in the service provided, requires to broaden the knowledge and skills, as well as to expand its transmission.

An increasing demand for new qualifications and skills in the retail sector (community managers, on-line shopping management, commercial area management, etc.). These profiles are necessary to be competitive but, in many cases, the current crisis makes the recruiting costs difficult to assume.

Increasing demand for continuing vocational training together with very limited possibilities of enterprises to fund the training and high dependence on the decreasing public funding of CVT.

Atomization and low efficiency of the sector when applying processes in the Basque Country (more than 27 000 retail companies).

The increase of foreign tourists in the Basque Country helps to increase the sales volume but also requires a workforce attending clients in their languages.

The aging of the retail shop owners and the challenge of the generational replacement requires fostering the generational replacement and incorporation of qualified workforce in business, to favour its continuity as well as its modernization and innovation.

Commerce sector has a potential to become a refugee sector for unemployed by providing possibilities to establish independent business.

Increasing digitalization of the sales processes to improve its productivity and profitability, adapt to the new social and consumption habits: on-line sales, social networks, communication and on-line marketing. This requires a qualified workforce, the incorporation of new profiles through internal or external paths.

Low image of jobs in the sector – the sector is considered as unskilled: low professionalization image, high prices, bad working conditions (unattractive timetables and low salaries). Out of 139 vocational training centres (public and private) located in the Basque Country, only 14 offer some speciality in commerce.

Portugal

The following contextual factors of the retail trade sector in Portugal influencing the development of apprenticeship in this sector are distinguished:

1. The increase of international trade of services in Portugal.
2. Increase of the volume and impact of the third sector to the national economy: between 1995 and 2006, the impact of GVA of the third sector in the national economy increased 7% and in 2006 reached around 73%. The employment increased about 6.4%, representing 60% of the employment in 2006. Considering the segmentation of the sector, we realise that tradable services have greater impact, representing 3.2% average annual real growth in GVA of 2.4% growth in employment between 1995 and 2006, compared to the average annual growth of the entire economy.
3. The growth of exports in 2010 due to the diversification of destination countries, since export to European Union market decreased.

4. The importance of retail trade sector in the national economy: in 2012, according to the preliminary results from Integrated Business Accounts System (SCIE), the number of enterprises in trade sector were 245 000 (-1.2% compared to 2011), employing 765 000 workers (-4.5%), accounting to the total turnover of EUR 120 550 million (-5.3%). Comparing to the total of the business sector, these values represent a contribution of 22.2%, 21.5% and 36.8%, respectively.
5. A strong impact of the wholesale trade to the turnover of the trade sector: in 2012 (53.8%) there was a reduction in turnover throughout the entire sector (-3.0%) and the largest average turnover by enterprise (EUR 1 012 300). However, the retail trade sector experienced a decrease of 3.5% in turnover in 2012, 3.7% in employed personnel and 1.1% in the number of enterprises number, showing some retraction tendencies.
6. The domination of SMEs in the sector: enterprises with less than 50 employees (SMEs), representing 99.6% of the enterprises throughout the entire sector. Although private enterprises were more representative (61.7%), societies employed a bigger number of workers (75.4%) and generated 93.9% of the turnover.
7. Increasing investments in skills and qualifications of the Portuguese population: national agencies and institutes for the coordination, implementation and assessment of policies regarding the education and vocational training (VET) of young people and adults were created; different VET modalities for young people and adults were developed, tested, assessed and disseminated; several national qualifications acquired through non-higher education were developed, updated and/or adjusted, allowing to create a dynamic tool for the management of the National Qualifications System: National Catalogue of Qualifications; the process of Quality Certification of VET Institutions was developed and is being implemented over the past 3-4 years (responsibility of General Directorate of Employment and Labour Relations); companies are more open, available and interested in investing in the qualification of their workers.
8. Increased orientation to innovations and quality development of services: there was a significant increase of companies providing consultancy services in such fields as legal support, accounting, management consultancy, public relations, advertising, benchmarking, commercial services, technology-based services, innovation management, etc.
9. Development and investments in the extra-European Union market revitalising the relations and commercial trade with countries historically and culturally close to the Portuguese reality by

establishing a symbiotic relationship with countries, whose official language is Portuguese, becoming a strategic partner in the commercial trade between the African countries, whose official language is Portuguese, Latin America (Brazil and Venezuela) and EU countries.

10. Implications for sector development towards training and skills building: the growth of investment in VET training, especially of young people; the development of new professional profiles or the improvement of the existing ones; the increasing closeness between VET system and labour market.

2. Legal Framework and Environment of Apprenticeship in Italy, Basque Country (Spain), Portugal and Bulgaria

The legal frameworks that regulate or are related to apprenticeship in the partner countries are very diverse in many terms:

- 1) In terms of the institutional forms of apprenticeship, the legal acts of partner countries provide very different types: in Italy apprenticeship is integrated in the initial VET and compulsory education, apprenticeship for the employment training, continuing vocational training, higher education; in the Basque country there are attempts to implement legal regulations for dual apprenticeship, whereas in Portugal the national legislation affirms the leading role of the initial VET schools in the apprenticeship schemes and provides no legal status of worker for the trainees and no status of employers for enterprises accepting the trainees (entities that support alternating between school and work). In Bulgaria the company-based form of apprenticeship is foreseen only for the crafts sector.
- 2) In terms of the level and form of legal regulation, a strong influence of the regions in defining the delivery of apprenticeship training is observed in Italy with tripartite contracts of apprenticeship and increasing tendency of apprenticeships without the contracts; the initiatives of regional and sector stakeholders in establishing apprenticeship schemes are supported by the Spanish legislation; strong national regulation of apprenticeship governing the contracts between the trainees and VET providers in Portugal and legal regulation of employers based apprenticeship in crafts in Bulgaria.

Italy

The legal framework of apprenticeship is based on the special employment contract that opens access to apprenticeship as a **right-duty to education and training** (or first level) aimed at achieving a qualification through initial vocational education and training, **professional apprenticeship**, aimed at obtaining a professional qualification through on-the-job training and **apprenticeship for the acquisition of a diploma or advanced training** (or higher apprenticeship), which allows to pursue degrees in secondary school and higher education, including undergraduate, master, PhD programs, as well as higher technical specialization.

The existing legislation includes apprenticeship in compulsory education for the persons until 18 years of age as an alternative to school-based vocational education and training process. It was the *Collegato*

lavoro (the law covering the principal matters relating to labour disputes) that established that apprenticeship was able to meet the requirements of the last year of compulsory education, thus allowing the recruitment of young people from 15 years of age.

The Law regulates the duration of compulsory 1st level apprenticeship (a maximum duration of three years, depending on the qualification to be obtained), while the delivery of training is defined by the collective bargaining of social partners and general standards set by the Regions.

The professional apprenticeship is designed for young people between the ages 18 (17 with a qualification system of education and training) and 29 who can acquire a professional qualification valid in contractual terms through on-the-job training and achievement of basic, transversal and technical vocational skills. An individual training plan has to be attached to the employment contract. The Plan describes the training course from professional and cross-sector side, with a particular attention to the content, mode of delivery and length.

Even if the training takes place exclusively in the company, the regions still retain an important role in training control: the specific apprenticeship must fit into a predetermined path resulting, *ex ante*, from the agreement between the regions and social partners, with specific reference to the definition of training profiles and verifiable, *ex post*, by the public sector and, in particular, by the Regions for the certification of training results.

High level apprenticeship enables young people to acquire secondary school diplomas or university degrees, such as Bachelor, Master, and since 2008, also PhD. It is a very flexible in terms of contractual relations too: even individual companies – in the absence of appropriate regional regulations – may enter into an agreement with the education institution delivering the course and work more responsively to their needs, allowing the building of a tailored professional profile for the youth.

The apprenticeship contract is tripartite and is concluded by and between the company, the apprentice and the training institution. As for the business, it is expected that it is possible to enter into a contract of high-level apprenticeship in all manufacturing sectors. With regard to apprentices, young people between 18 and 29 years old may be a party to the contract.

The regulatory framework governing apprenticeship in Italy has recently been affected by important changes, following the approval of the Legislative Decree n. 167/2011 laying down the Testo Unico for apprenticeship, promoted by the Government. The novelty of the rules should be seen as the need to

make the apprenticeship fully operational as a tool for inclusion, training, education, and cultural and professional growth for young people, and not just as a working contract. Even today, the apprenticeship is in fact used to recruit young workforce at low cost, or, as a flexible leverage and lower labour costs for enterprises. Yet, this logic was not the consequent answer to the previous reform in 2003, which reformed the entire institution, enhancing the educational value and potential employment, recognizing apprenticeship as the axis of education and training system, as confirmed by the recent Finance Act. The 2011 Legislature intends to turn the apprenticeship into a contract for the employment of young people for excellence, and a potential tool that, through education and quality training, would realise the dynamic process between the training needs of young people and professional exigencies coming from firms.

An increasing spread of apprenticeships without employment contract is observed. Other contract forms, such as flexible contracts of employment or autonomous collaborations, with no educational training content of apprenticeship, are widespread. They are ideal tools to qualify and strengthen young people's entry into the world of work. On-the-job training and orientation (internship) without an employment contract is also very popular. About 300 000 young people are involved in such training. If internship is growing, apprentices decrease year after year. On the other hand, companies also prefer more lightweight tools than internships, without formal charges necessary for apprenticeship contract: from the complex legislation to the searching for a training course meeting the business needs. The internships, as well as collaboration contracts, are an alternative for businesses and are even more attractive as no real training related cost is involved.

The Basque Country (Spain)

The internship in the school based initial VET system is regulated by Law in general, not specifically for each different sector.

Initial Vocational Training (Official) addresses school-aged young people and is arranged as described below.

Specific professional modules of the initial professional qualification (PCPI): Addressed to people between 16 and 18 years old who had not obtained the Mandatory Secondary Education Graduation (ESO) title. **The initial professional qualification** allows them, on the one hand, to obtain this title, and on the other hand, to obtain a level 1 Professional Certificate. If a person doesn't have the ESO title he/she doesn't have access to higher education (Secondary School, Higher and Intermediate Degree Cycles, etc.). With the new State Legislation for Quality Improvement (LOMCE), it seems that the PCPIs are going to disappear and they will be considered as Basic Vocational Training (although there is a big opposition against its implementation).

The intermediate degree training cycles (Intermediate Degree Technicians)

The higher degree training cycles (Higher Degree Technicians)

Specialisation courses (legislation pending) aimed at improving the Intermediate and Higher Degree series competences in students. For this initiative to start the support of the minimum number of companies is necessary.

In the Initial Vocational Training (official), the internships in companies (FCT – Training in the workplace) are mandatory, meaning that they are part of the educational curriculum and the student can only obtain the Graduation Title (Intermediate or Higher), once he/she has passed satisfactorily the internship in the company.

The internship in a company (Training in the workplace) is regulated by the 156/2003 Decree of 8 July 2003; in this Decree the responsibilities of each stakeholder (enterprise, educational centre and students) are addressed. These internships must be done by the students finishing their studies in their second year at the centre, having passed all the modules that make up the academic education. The duration of the internship for the specializations of Commerce, Commercial Activities (Intermediate Degree), and Sales Management (Higher Degree) is 360 hours.

In 2013, 10 035 students of VT did internships in different companies. Among them, 100 students came from the Commercial Activities of intermediate degree, and 163 came from the Sales Management and Commercial Areas of the higher cycle.

Regarding the employment rate of the students who have done the Marketing and Commerce cycles, it was 57.2% in 2010 compared to 66.3 % of the total of Vocational Training students.

Employment training is a more regulated dual apprenticeship. The Royal Decree 395/2007 of 23 March regulates the different educational initiatives which form the vocational training subsystem for the employment, its functioning and funding rules, and its organizational structure and institutional participation.

This Royal Decree includes a regulation regarding the rotation of training and employment, which is integrated into the training activities of the training contracts, and also provides for employment-training public programs that allow the workers to reconcile education with the internship in the workplace.

Within the employment training programs, education linked to obtaining a Certificate of Professionalism is gaining more weight. The Certificate of Professionalism is an official document which recognizes the professional competences that each person has got in work related activity significant for the employment. It refers to the qualifications of the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications. The Catalogue is issued by the Labour Administration and determines the education required for each profession in the workplace. Each Professional Certificate is regulated by a Royal Decree regarding the training itinerary and the mandatory duration of the internship needed to obtain the certificate.

The Basque Government, following its policy of promoting employability among young people, set up a novel project in 2012 named HEZIBI, based on the Dual Training or Rotational Education, an apprenticeship method which combines training and work, something that has already been consolidated in various European countries that see in this system numerous advantages for the student and the companies.

It is a project set up and coordinated by the Departments of Education and Employment of the Basque Government, together with the Vocational Training Centres Network, and other stakeholders, business organizations, etc.

The aim of the HEZIBI program is to develop a rotational Vocational Training model addressed to students from Vocational Training and young unemployed people, with the objective to improve their professional competences in obtaining a certificate of professionalism or an initial vocational training title in a rotation system, with a paid work activity in the enterprise, helping to adjust the needs of companies with the competences acquired by the workforce.

The student keeps a working relation with the enterprise and, at the same time, an academic relation with the Vocational Training Centre. The rotation training model transfers part of the apprenticeship program to the enterprises, making them key agents in the learning process of the student.

The program is addressed to students from 16 to 30 years of age, registered in Lanbide Basque Employment Service. An Employment Contract for the Training and Apprenticeship is made between the company and the student / worker, and the job assigned to the student must be closely related to the professional profile of the formal education cycle.

The student participating in the program is exempt from doing the FCT (internship in the workplace), because it is replaced by the working activity in the company. Generally, the projects have a first course taking place in the education centre, and a second one in rotation (with a maximum of 75% of the time at the company and the rest in the education centre), supported by a one year contract.

This program is regulated by the joint Order of 3 October 2012 by the Counsellors of Education, Universities and Research, and Employment and Social Issues, who establish the regulatory basis of the HEZIBI Program of training and work in rotation for young people.

Moreover, the Education and Apprenticeship Contract established by the Legislative Royal Decree 10/2011 of 26 August 2011 and the modifications set out by the Law 3/2012 of 6 July make the initial framework which gives the training in rotation a legally governed labour direction.

In the call for the period 2014-2015, the program is no longer called HEZIBI; now it is called Dual Training as in the rest of the country.

Regarding the normative legislation of the FCTs (Education in the workplace), we encounter different norms depending on which training we are referring to, the Initial Vocational Training or the Employment Training. According our interviewees, the aim is to move forward towards a unified norm that will integrate the whole system. In fact, a joint draft has been prepared by the Departments of

Education and Employment, but it is on a standby right now. It is necessary to move forward to improve the coordination between the Departments and to give space for queries regarding the new Vocational Training Titles, which are not included in the Actual Normative of the FCT, thus causing problems and gaps. This new regulation would also include the internships for the certificates of professionalism, internships abroad, project developments, etc., which are not included in the internship regulation.

Portugal

Apprenticeship Courses are one of the modalities of the Portuguese VET system and consist of the initial training of young people, where the main focus is integration in the labour market. Therefore, the training in VET institution takes place at the same time as the practical training at the workplace (in a company), in an alternating system. The studying plan includes four training components: Sociocultural; Scientific; Technological; Practical. These courses culminate with the presentation of a Project for the final evaluation. The target groups are young people under 25, who had finished 9 years of school (basic level) and had not finished 12 years of school (secondary level) and who have an interest in getting a professional qualification and secondary education at the same time. Upon the successful completion of a Vocational Course, young people will be awarded a Secondary Level of Education certificate and the Professional Level 4 qualification as defined by the National Qualifications System.

The legislation of Apprenticeship Courses has been changing for a long time and the currently applicable law is the Inter-ministerial Order n. 1497/2008 of 19 December¹. This is a national law and it is organised in 6 chapters:

- Initial issues (scope, concepts, conditions of access);
- License of the courses (applicants);
- Organisation, management and function of the training (curriculum structure, training duration, selection of trainees, methodological orientations, practice training, apprenticeship contract);
- Actors of the training (trainees, VET institutions, pedagogical team);

¹ This Inter-ministerial Order is available at <http://www.iefp.pt>.

- Assessment and certification of the apprenticeship (principles and assessment criteria, training and final assessment, progression, final project evaluation, complains, classification and course conclusion, certification);
- Final issues (specific regulation, motorisation and evaluation, transitory norm, repealing norm);
- Annex (pedagogical structure of Apprenticeship Courses, Models of Training Certificate and Diploma).

Every year the Employment and Professional Training Institute, Public Institute (IEFP,I.P)² develop and publish a specific regulation governing the apprenticeship courses. The Regulation supplements and interprets the generally applied National law (Inter-ministerial Order n. 1497/2008 of 19th of December)³.

The last specific regulation⁴ was reviewed in March of 2014 and it is organised in 2 parts:

- Technical and Pedagogical procedures (targets and conditions of access, typologies of entities, external entities of training (EET), entities that support alternating (ESA), partner entities for qualification (PEQ), training components, curriculum structure, planning, organization and development of training, methodologies, assessment of apprenticeship, certification, trainees, technical-pedagogical team, pursuit of higher education studies, technical-pedagogical process, monitoring EET by IEFP, I.P.).
- Administrative and Financial procedures (Finance, proposal and payments, costs framework, profits, maximum values for finance, accounting process).

It should be noted that all these legal documents or regulations are applied to all sectors and there is no specific legislation or regulation to the retail sector.

Before the PTW starts, VET entities must identify potential ESAs for its development, immediately after the in-class training gets started. The first step is to identify the potential ESA near the partnership network, according to the required profile. The first contact with potential ESAs is established by the training manager (of the VET entity) with the human resource manager of the identified company. If the company is interested and available to be an ESA, an agreement is made between both entities. It

² The IEFP, I.P is formally introduced in section 2.4 of this document.

³ Inter-ministerial Order is available at <http://www.iefp.pt>.

⁴ *Regulamento Especifico 2014 - Cursos de Aprendizagem: Formar jovens para um emprego qualificável*, available at <http://www.iefp.pt>.

should be noted that this agreement includes the terms of reference of the PTW⁵, the individual training plan for each trainee⁶, responsibilities of both parties, the schedule of training and the assessment procedure.

In the Portuguese VET system, usually the trainees establish a training contract with the VET institution. However, when PTW starts, the trainees and companies do not have any bilateral contract. The formality to the training period at the workplace is established between VET institution and companies, usually with partnership agreement (which does not have to be in writing). Thus, neither the young trainees, nor the companies at any moment assume the role of the “real worker” or the “real employer”: the main commitment is between VET institutions and young trainees.

The development of apprenticeship courses in the retail sector depends on public funding provided by the IEFP, I.P. In detail, according to Article 21 – Specific Regulation – of Chapter VI of Inter-ministerial Order n. 1497/2008 of December 19th, IEFP, I.P.⁷ is the public body, under the supervision of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, responsible for the technical, financial and pedagogical issues of the Apprenticeship Courses. Thus, following the national law for Apprenticeship Courses, every year the IEFP, I.P. conceives a Specific Regulation available on its website⁸. All the documents that must be used by VET institutions that promote Apprenticeship Courses are also available on the same website. According to some stakeholders, this annual update of the specific regulation is crucial to the improvement and maturity of the apprenticeship system and the annual revision of the document is recognised as an advantage by the VET Institutions.

As mentioned above, the entities which can deliver apprenticeship courses are the Employment and VET Centres of IEFP, I.P. and other External Entities of Training⁹. The EETs are publically invited¹⁰ to present

⁵ As established by the Inter-ministerial Order n. 1497/2008 of 19th of December.

⁶ Usually negotiated between Training Manager of the VET entity and HR Manager or Tutor of the company.

⁷ Inter-ministerial Order is available at <http://www.iefp.pt>

⁸ There is a specific site for trainees: http://portal.iefp.pt/cdrom/cursos_aprendizagem/index.html

⁹ VET Centres with subsidiary management of IEFP, I.P., VET institutions with active protocols of collaboration and other entities with IEFP, I.P. authorization and finance support.

proposals for the delivery of apprenticeship courses every time when IEFP,¹⁰ I.P. cannot provide an adequate offer to the market needs.

Bulgaria

Traineeships and apprenticeships are not governed by a special normative document (law, ordinance, decree, regulation, etc.) but are discussed in several laws and secondary legislation. These are the Law on Employment Promotion, Craft Act, Law on Vocational Education and Training and others.

The Law on Employment Promotion

Article 17 states that persons seeking employment can use the schemes of traineeship and/or apprenticeship.

Article 41 provides for the possibility to financially support each open workplace where an unemployed person under 20 years is hired for a traineeship. The divisions of the Employment Agency grant a certain amount of money to the employer according to Article 30 (a)(2) for the period of the traineeship, but not longer than 9 months. A person who has acquired the required qualification for the profession or part of the profession over the last 24 months and has no work experience in this profession may be hired for the traineeship. Article 46 provides that for each workplace created for the traineeship, where the unemployed person sent by the divisions of the Employment Agency is hired, the employer shall receive a certain amount of money according to Article 30(a)(2) for the period of the traineeship, but not longer than 6 months. A person who has acquired the required qualification for the profession or part of the profession over the last 24 months and has no work experience in this profession will be hired for the traineeship.

¹⁰ Public invitation is made in IEFP, I.P. portal.

Craft Act governs the practice of crafts, organization of crafts and artisan training. Section “Apprentices” in Article 45 defines that apprentices are people who work and learn the craft in the craftsman’s enterprise. The apprentice may learn in the craftsman’s enterprise only from a master. A person, who is at least 16 years old and is not studying in the daytime school system of the public education system or is not a full-time student of a high school, may be an apprentice in the craftsman’s enterprise.

Article 46 stipulates that the craftsman’s enterprise can only train apprentices in the crafts practiced at this company. Only the craftsman’s enterprises that have adequate facilities may deliver the training for apprentices. The number of apprentices is determined by the training opportunities and the needs of the craftsman’s enterprise. A master cannot train more than two apprentices at the same time. The training of apprentices must be delivered in accordance with the requirements of the guidelines for apprentice training developed and approved by the National Craftsman’s Chamber in coordination with the National Agency of Professional Education and Training. The apprentice can study only if contracted to do so by the owner of the craft enterprise.

(3) The contract between the apprentice and the owner of the craft enterprise shall determine: 1. the training period; 2. the object of training (the craft that the apprentice will learn); 3. the financial liabilities of the owner of the craft enterprise and the apprentice. The employment relationship between the apprentice and the owner of a craft enterprise is governed by the Labour Code. Regional crafts chambers maintain registers of apprentices trained in the craftsman’s enterprises (the Register of Apprentices). The terms and conditions for keeping the Register of Apprentices shall be determined by the regulations issued by the National Chamber of Crafts.

The Law on Vocational Education and Training, among other issues, governs the practical training, which is organized as educational practice and work-based practice. The following places for practical training are specified: 1. Training facilities of schools; 2. Training facilities of similar schools or vocational training centres in the Republic of Bulgaria and abroad; 3. Legal entities and natural persons; 4. Training facilities at enterprises; educational and training facilities of schools, sports halls, stadiums and swimming pools.

Article 31 states that practical training is conducted as educational-training, educational-productive and productive-educational activities. Schools enter into agreements with practical training providers.

Schools can organize the practical training independently and/or cooperate with legal entities and natural bodies producing goods and services, who fulfil the educational requirements for achieving the qualification in a profession, have vocational training documentation in place and have applicants for vocational training. The practical training is organized and financed under the terms and conditions set by the Minister of Education and Science agreed with the Minister of Finance.

3. Organisation of apprenticeship in the retail sector: institutions, stakeholders and their partnership

The organisation of apprenticeship training in the partner countries is very diverse with various roles and powers of involved partners and stakeholders. In Italy the in-company training is organised under collective agreements between trade unions and employers, where employers enjoy high autonomy in defining and changing the contents of the curricula, certification of skills and competences. Another distinctive feature of the organization of apprenticeship in Italy is the development of apprenticeship schemes in the sector of higher education. The organization of apprenticeship in the Basque Country in Spain is characterized by the minor role of business stakeholders in making decisions on the funding and organization of apprenticeship, as well as good relationships and coordination between the training providers and regional administration. Here the training centres play an important role in designing and implementing the apprenticeship standards. Another distinctive feature of the organization of apprenticeship in Spain is the strong reference of the contents of training to the national occupational standards. The main specific feature of the organisation of apprenticeship training in Portugal is a very big variety of involved training providers, including initial VET centres, private training entities, employers, employment agencies, etc. The organisation of apprenticeship in Bulgaria is distinguished by a high diversity of organization and funding schemes, public funding coming from the state budget and ESF funds. Another distinctive feature of the organisation of apprenticeship in this country is low state regulation and coordination of apprenticeship initiatives in the field of employment and labour market policies, resulting in the lack of coordination of stakeholders and their responsibilities.

Italy

The regulation and trade union agreements have given the possibility to the commercial sector to pay for the training course for apprentices inside the company: collective agreements and bilateral bodies define the notion of training in the company and determine, for each training profile, the duration and mode of training delivery, recognition of professional qualification and recording in the training booklet.

Three main features are distinguished:

1) defined notion of business training (training inside the company);

2) identification of training profiles for each reference and educational profile, determining the duration and mode of delivery of training;

3) established procedures for the recognition of professional qualifications and recording in the training booklet.

Business training is the training run entirely by the employer, even outside the company, without resourcing to public funds. The employer, therefore, has alternative possibilities to start an apprenticeship relationship by making use of public resources and public training offer, or organize the internal training inside the company, or through the trade association.

The training involves transversal and basic skills, as well as in vocational education content. The vocational education contents is divided in 'sector', 'area' and 'profile'. The employer, therefore, must choose the appropriate skills profile for the apprentice's career of the. To optimize the implementation of the training activities, the employer may include in the individual training plan, also some skills profile related to other specific training profiles.

The delivery of the training shall be organized using professional profiles with coherent skills for the training of the apprentice. The training may be delivered by internal or external trainers, or even by the employer. Training can also be delivered in a non-formal manner: the company is not required to have special premises dedicated to the training; the training may take place on the job.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, the employer certifies the skills acquired by the apprentice by giving notice to the territorial unit of the public authority in the field of employment services and a copy to the employee. The notice shall record the completion of compulsory education by the apprentice in the company. The relevant training and professional qualification may be officially recorded in a document with minimum contents, for example a personal training booklet.

Raising the age for access to apprenticeships, the professional apprenticeship (and apprenticeship for higher education) could be placed in the training chain very close to continuing education: in this sense thinking about the training for apprentices, considering the larger framework of adult education, the basic idea is that apprenticeship should become a channel of training more and more integrated into the channel of the continuing education to eliminate the perception that apprenticeship is a training channel of lower level. The factors that affect the success of the training initiatives of the apprenticeship contract are essentially related to:

- The possibility that both parties to the contract of apprenticeship are encouraged to continue the relationship at the end of the contract;
- The certification and the formal recognition of training received by the apprentice.

Spain (the Basque Country)

The funding system of Vocational & Continuous Training in Spain and in the Basque Autonomous Region is characterized by its strong institutionalization (the decisions and resources are mainly institutional), and the stakeholders and business sectors play a minor role compared to other countries.

In general, the normative regulations governing the Vocational Training for Employment comes from the Spanish Government, but the Basque Autonomous Region has a competency transferred from the National Government to independently regulate the field of Education and Employment, and therefore is able to develop and adapt the norms to the particularities of our region.

According to the interviews with specialists from the autonomous Administration, a better coordination with the State Government is required to more actively participate in the design of norms, implicating the technical bodies of the different administrations to create a state level network of Vocational Training that would reconcile the management tools and the appropriate coordination of the processes.

There is also a demand for more coordination within the Administration of the Basque Government, especially between the Departments of Employment and Education because in some cases there are competency conflicts that should be solved.

In general, there is a good coordination among the training centres and the administration: the norms are defined, as well as the curriculum for each title. It does seem that they have some leeway for adaption. Regarding the internships, the Education Centre informs the Administration about the development of the internship (calendar, timetable, etc.) and coordination between both parties is established. The centre, following the curriculum design for each title, establishes the standards of evaluation of students who do the apprenticeship in the enterprise. The centre is responsible for finding the most appropriate companies in order to guarantee that the training is suitable for acquiring the competences, which the student should get in order to obtain the title.

Companies, through their business organizations, communicate their needs and interests to the relevant Administrations, Education Centres, but it is necessary to deepen the interrelationship so that education would meet the real needs of the companies in order to reinforce their participation and commitment with the system. Good practice has already developed in industrial sectors that have a strong link and commitment since the beginning of the vocational training system, and therefore we have a clear improvement opportunity in our sector.

In our specific case, we have to find ways to foster an improvement of our sector's image and its attractiveness for hiring and maintaining qualified personnel, to increase the demand for specialized training in the retail sector for the enterprises and their current and future employees. This would favour an increase in the number of centres offering specializations in the retail sector, organizing internships in our companies and the incorporation into the labour market in our sector, which will help in sensitizing our entrepreneurs regarding the necessity to count on qualified personnel to improve the viability, competitiveness and sustainability of the sector.

Portugal

Employment and Professional Training Institute (IEFP, I. P.) provides public services and its mission is to stimulate the creation and quality of the employment and fight against unemployment by executing employment and vocational training policies.

Created in 1979, IEFP, I.P. is a Public Institute with administrative and financial autonomy under the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security. To achieve its mission, IEFP, I.P. has decentralised services and created a structure covering the entire territory of the country. The IEFP comprises a structure of decentralized services, organized into 5 Regional Offices, according to the areas defined for the Regional Offices. The organic structure of the Regional Offices includes the Coordination Services and the Local Executive Bodies (86 Job Centres, 31 Directly Managed Vocational Training Centres, 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Centre and 8 Business Creation Support Centres). The Coordination Services of the Regional Offices are made up of Organic Units that offer technical, administrative and financial support to the Regional Office. Decentralised services are organised through the Network of Centres.

The Network of IEFP, I.P. Centres is composed of:

- Job Centres;
- Employment and VET Centres;
- Training and Professional Rehabilitation Centres.

The Employment and VET Centres provide Apprenticeship Courses. However, other entities, namely the External Entities of Training (EET), can also provide VET modalities:

- VET Centres with subsidiary management of IEFP, I.P.;
- VET institutions with active protocols of collaboration with IEFP, I.P.;
- Other entities with IEFP, I.P. authorization and financial support.

According to the latest regulation of apprenticeship courses developed and provided by IEFP, I.P.¹¹ there are three types of entities, plus the decentralised structures of the IEFP, I.P., which contribute directly or indirectly to the development of the apprenticeship courses, which are:

- External Entities of Training (EET);
- Entities of Support to Alternating (ESA):
- Partner Entities for Qualification (PEQ).

Table 1- Brief characterisation of VET Entities which develop and deliver Apprenticeship Courses¹².

External Entities of Training (EET)	Entities of Support to Alternating (ESA)	Partners Entities for Qualification (PEQ)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and develop the following training components: sociocultural, scientific and technological; • Monitor the practical training at the workplace (PTW) developed in an entity supporting alternating; • Ensure directly the PTW of some part or all trainees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the PTW according to the individual plan of activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available physic and human resources to the development of the courses in the logic of share and optimize the public means.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public training entities; • Private training entities certified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private companies; • Other employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic, secondary and professional schools; • Polytechnic and University establishments; • Technological Centres and clusters of companies.

External Entities of Training (EET)¹³

Every year IEFP, I.P. provides a series of Apprenticeship Courses through its internal resources (Network of Centres) and according to the market needs and expectations. EETs are publically invited¹⁴ to present proposals for the implementation of Apprenticeship Courses when IEFP, I.P. cannot provide an adequate offer to the market needs.

EET can be:

- Public entities with competences in VET domain described in their status;
- Public and Private entities of training, certified through the Certification of Training Entities System, except basic, secondary and vocational schools.

It is possible, however for IEFP, I.P. to delegate the development of this VET modality to private education institutions, which have as a social object (plus the educative offer that they have under the Ministry of Education and Science) the development of VET courses. In these cases, the compulsory education and VET courses must be independent at logistic and pedagogical levels.

Entities of Support to Alternating (ESA)¹⁵

ESA are the entities which receive one or more trainees for the PTW and are usually selected by the entities which promote the apprenticeship courses. The requirements to be eligible as ESA

¹³ Idem

¹⁴ Public invitation is made in IEFP, I.P. portal.

¹⁵ Regulamento Específico 2014 - Cursos de Aprendizagem: Formar jovens para um emprego qualificável, available in <http://www.iefp.pt>.

body are very detailed in the specific annual regulation but the entities responsible for the selection have autonomy and can sometimes define a specific profile.

Partners Entities for the Qualification (PEQ)¹⁶

Schools governed by the Ministry of Education and Science, polytechnic and higher education institutions and municipalities are some of the entities with which IEPF, I.P. has memorandums of collaboration. The idea of these partnerships is to optimize the local resources (human, material and logistic) and, at the same time, stimulate the sharing of experiences between the different VET providers.

¹⁶ Idem

Bulgaria

The Ministry of Education and Science implements the coordination and methodological control on the interaction between schools and employers.

Regional Education Inspectorates identify young people who have dropped out of school and provide information on the regional LOD range. Dropped out students are informed and advised about the traineeships and apprenticeships.

The Employment Agency provides methodological guidance, performs overall coordination and organization for the implementation of activities to promote and support traineeship and apprenticeship. The agency allocates funds to targeted programs for traineeship and apprenticeship.

Regional Employment Service provides methodological assistance and support to the Labour Office in implementing the activities to promote and support traineeship and apprenticeship; coordinates the interaction between persons in charge of promoting traineeship and apprenticeship at regional level.

Training institutions conclude an agreement to deliver the training, deliver the training for acquiring professional qualification and/or key competencies; issue certification documents to successful graduates.

Employers create workplaces for traineeship and apprenticeship; conclude individual work contracts with trainees/apprentices; pay salaries to the employed trainees and apprentices for the actual work time in accordance with the provisions of the Labour Code; insure the employed trainees/apprentices according to the Social Insurance Code and the Health Insurance Act; pay additional remuneration to mentors responsible for the training of employed youth apprentices.

The funding support to the organization of traineeship and apprenticeship in companies and public institutions is not uniform and comes from different sources. Mostly it is publicly funded, but there are examples in-house funding and funding through different projects and programs.

Public funding comes from the State budget as provided by the Law on Employment Promotion and the National Programme for Employment Action. The funding decision is made by the Government on the annual basis. Another source of public financial resources is the Operational Programme Human Resources Development, which is part of the National Strategic Reference Framework and is supported by the European Social Fund with national co-financing.

Employment Promotion Act provides for the possibility to receive Government support for each workplace open for traineeship where an unemployed person under 20 years of age sent by the divisions of the Employment Agency is hired. An amount of money is granted to the employer according to Article 30(a)(2) for the period of the traineeship, but not longer than 9 months. A person who has acquired the required qualification of the profession or part of the profession over the last 24 months and has no work experience in this profession will be hired for the traineeship workplace.

According to Article 46 (as amended - SG. 26 2003 pcs. 26 2008 pcs. 59 2010) the employer shall provide the training to the employee at the workplace specified by the mentor. A mentor is an employee of the same enterprise that is undertaking the training process under para. 1 in the profession or craft, and is qualified, certified and has at least three years of working experience in the same profession or craft.

According to Article 30(a)(2), the employer shall receive an amount of money for each workplace open for traineeship where an unemployed person sent from the divisions of the Employment Agency is hired for not longer than 6 months. A person who has acquired the required qualification of the profession or part of the profession over the last 24 months and has no work experience in this profession will be hired for the traineeship workplace.

The Operational Programme Human Resources Development is a strategic document, which sets the framework for using the funds co-financed by the European Social Fund and the national budget in the programming period 2007 - 2013. The following measures are financed under OP HRD that promotes traineeship and apprenticeship:

Plan “A New Beginning”

The main objective of the project A New Beginning is to provide an opportunity for young people up to the age of 29, who have completed secondary education or graduated from a higher education institution, to train for a position that corresponds to the acquired education in the professional field of secondary / higher education. This action facilitates youth transition from education to employment.

Jobs under the scheme are opened for the period of 6 months. A mentor is provided for each hired unemployed person. Each mentor is responsible for the minimum of 1 and the maximum of 7 people. Once the employer chooses the candidate, he proceeds to signing a contract for employment. Employers who create jobs in all sectors of the economy, with the exception of those operating in the field of agriculture, forestry and fish industry, can participate in the project. The project can include

municipalities, municipal enterprises within the meaning of Article 52 of the Municipal Property Act and the state administration structures. They may open only such jobs that are in the field employer's specialization.

Employers can hire the unemployed person for a period of 6 months at full-time and for the entire apprenticeship period they receive funding from the OP Human Resources Development. Employers receive the following financial support: for the employed trainee - remuneration of the minimum insurance income for the main economic activity and qualification levels for the year; remuneration paid for the annual full-pay leave under Article 155 of the Labour Code, compensation under Article 40(5) CSR insurance payable by the employer, remuneration of half the minimum wage and social security contributions payable by the employer for the mentor appointed to the trainee.

Student Practice Plan

The Student Practice BG051PO001-3.3.07- 0001 is the initiative of the Ministry of Education, funded and supported by the OP Human Resources Development and co-financed by the ESF. Employers in the project are business and non-profit companies, state and local authorities, government agencies, companies, training organizations, employers' organizations and other legal entities. Access and registration of employers is completely free through the web-system of the project. The sociability of the process of recruiting employers implies some competition between them by being able to present themselves in an appropriate manner in order to attract the best students. Mentors of the students are employees of the companies that provide placements for students. Each mentor guides from 1 to 20 students. Mentors participate in the development of curriculum and methodology for assessing the performance of students in collaboration with the supervising teachers. The Student Practice Project covers all schools in the system of vocational education and training. 46 000 students must pass the practical training. Practical training in a real working environment up to 240 hours is considered to be successful. After completion of the practical training and making the report the student is paid a scholarship of 300 leva. All students have the right to participate in the practical training in a real working environment once in their study period. The Budget of the project Student Practice is 30 million leva.

Employment Support Plan

The main objective of Employment Support project is to provide employment mainly to vulnerable groups in the labour market. These are unemployed persons registered at the Labour Directorate, persons with low qualifications and insufficient skills unemployed for over 12 months, unemployed persons with low education and unemployed representatives of ethnic minorities.

The project may involve private employers who create jobs in all sectors of the economy, with the exception of those operating in the field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Employers must fall within the scope of Article 1(1) of Regulation 1998/2006. Salary costs are the minimum assistance to the employer in accordance with Regulation 1998/2006g of 15 December 2006.

Municipalities, municipal enterprises within the meaning of Article 52 of the Municipal Property Act and district governments can participate in the project. They all have limitations in activities in which they can create jobs.

Employers hire unemployed persons for the period of 6 to 12 months for full- time jobs. For the entire employment period they receive funding from the OP Human Resources Development. If the mentor is a business owner, he is not funded. For the employee – compensation of the minimum insurance income for the main economic activity and qualification levels for the year, compensation of paid annual leave under Article 155 CT; compensation under Article 40(5) of the CSR contributions payable by the employer on the above amounts. For certain mentors – compensation of the amount of half the minimum wage, provided the training is not less than 40 hours per month to employees hired under the programme. In order to receive the compensation for mentoring another person, he must be hired under labour contract or service relations.

National Youth Strategy (2010-2020)

The first priority of the strategy is to promote economic activity and career development of young people. The strategy covers the total of 51 414 people. Most of them – 40 246 – have benefited from projects under the first Operational Objective, which aims to create new jobs and growth in the labour market by promoting inclusion and career development of young people.

These include measures such as the provision of traineeship and apprenticeship in various companies involved in projects to promote the research interests of students, traineeships with state and municipal

authorities, receive student support and credit support in labour mobility, guidance services etc. Funding is provided under the Operational Programme Human Resources Development, the national budget for the promotion of employment and municipal budgets.

Although it is not very common, but there are good examples of companies that run and finance their own traineeship programs. In most cases these are local subsidiaries of international companies that have traditions in traineeship and apprenticeship.

A good practice example is Nestle Bulgaria, which has a long tradition in offering traineeship programs and providing opportunities for self-expression of young people. The traineeship Program of Nestle Bulgaria was established in 1997 and allows students to gain practical experience in a real business environment. It is in line with the company's principles to creating a shared value and commitment to socially significant initiatives, to support young people and assist their smooth entry into the professional environment. Trainees have the opportunity not only to learn about the functioning of the company, but are involved in real cases and projects. They acquire knowledge and experience to prepare them for their successful career. The traineeship program offers several types of short-term training, which can be paid or unpaid. Students are offered the opportunity to train and that is a logical continuation of their academic program. They have the opportunity to gain practical experience that complements their theoretical knowledge, observe the operation of the company from inside.

Summer traineeships are suitable mainly for senior-year students. The traineeship lasts three months and can be conducted in every department of the company. During the traineeship, students can apply their theoretical knowledge in practice and to find their professional skills through participation in real business projects. Each year, there are different numbers of apprenticeships and they take place in different departments.

Each year Nestle Bulgaria offers one-year traineeships to graduates and young professionals. With no specific start date and offered in various departments of the company, these traineeships are designed for recent graduates without professional experience and are an ideal place to kick-start a career path in a challenging work environment. The program has gained much interest among the candidates, as it allows for a smooth entry into the professional environment in the position for which no experience is required.

Employers use the opportunity for traineeship/apprenticeship regulated by the Law on Employment Promotion and funded by the National Action Plan for Employment and the Operational Programme Human Resources Development. This is a subsidized employment – compensation for the salaries and insurance contributions payable by the employer. The problem is the delay in recovering the compensations after the deadline stated in the contracts. When applying for these opportunities companies sometimes have problems with collecting and delivering the required documents. A comprehensive and lasting solution to the problem with traineeship/apprenticeship is needed through regulatory changes and involvement of the state through its agencies in this process. Employers that support programs for traineeship and apprenticeship should have tax breaks and regulated subsidies.

During the years of transition to the market economy, a gradual parting is noticeable between schools and the real economy. Fewer employers voluntary provide an opportunity for students learning a profession to do a traineeship or apprenticeship in their organizations. On the one hand, this is due to the employers' lack of financial resources to maintain such programs and the lack of resources in the training organizations. Obviously some legislative changes are necessary, which would give an opportunity to all students graduating from vocational schools to be introduced into traineeship and apprenticeship.

The trainee / apprentice have the same responsibilities as other employees in the company: to comply with the requirements of the employer and follow the instructions of the mentor responsible for the trainee's practical training. The trainee / apprentice is required to make individual efforts to master the profession. It is necessary to take the challenges of the apprenticeship and more challenging tasks. If the employer requires the trainee / apprentice to attend additional training courses, they become an integral part of his daily professional duties.

The employer shall provide a special workplace for qualification through traineeship / apprenticeship that is part of an enterprise. The workplaces that are created must be properly equipped for the trainee. The application for the vacancy sent by the employer to the employment office states that the job is open especially for traineeship / apprenticeship. The employer is obliged to conclude an employment contract with the person sent to him by the employment office.

The employer is not required (but can) to issue a document about the skills acquired by the trainee / apprentice.

There is no requirement for employers to be entered into the Register of Craftsmen in the Regional Chamber of Crafts. Acquisition of skills through apprenticeship can be done by entities who are not in the List of Crafts annexed to the Crafts Act.

Apprentices / trainees must acquire new knowledge and skills related to the workplace and workflow.

Employers must provide a mentor with appropriate qualifications and experience to introduce the recruits to the work.

After completion of the subsidized employment, the employer has the obligation to provide a job for a fixed term on the employer's cost. Difficulties lie in the requirement that payment for the job cannot be less than the official minimum wage. During the subsidized employment program the employer has time to check whether the worker will handle the tasks. The programme has economic advantages because during the subsidised apprenticeship period the employer does not have to pay from the company's budget.

If the traineeship / apprenticeship program lasts longer than 6 months, the insurance must be paid to the employer who hired the unemployed person for a trainee/apprentice.

If the hired trainee is under 29 years old, the employer receives funds in the amount of the minimum wage, insurances costs, and remuneration for the training of the employee. The difficulties are related to the fact that funding for traineeship / apprenticeship programs is secured within projects that are limited in time. This should be a constant, ongoing process.

Financial resources are needed in the first place in order to organize a traineeship / apprenticeship. The funding should come primarily from the state. Participating employers are responsible for the provision of relevant equipped workplaces, mentors, and monitoring of the traineeship / apprenticeship.

The host company must provide an equipped workplace and a mentor with appropriate qualifications and experience. The school must provide a teacher who is responsible for the relationship with the company, mentors and trainees / apprentices. He controls the process, but also helps methodically.

There is a period of adaption for the new employee in the new working environment. During this period there must be a mentor who can teach new workers. Some of his tasks should be allocated to other workers.

Traineeships / apprenticeships must be part of the education process in school. It is obligatory to have a coherent program between the host organization and the school and ensure coordination of all the activities in the process of organizing and implementing the traineeship / apprenticeship.

Employers have noticed the following weaknesses of apprenticeship schemes: long application processing time; documents must be prepared to be checked in the relevant state institutions; there are bureaucratic obstacles; accountability documents are quite complicated; there are no trained mentors who can appropriately transfer their knowledge and skills; there are no standard programs for this type of training. The strengths of the programme are as follows: the employer is able to check whether the employee is suitable for the job without investing money. Only time is invested.

Schools have noticed the following main weaknesses: the financing scheme for traineeships / apprenticeships programs is complicated; subsidized employment programs only target employers rather than professional schools; the relationship between the employer and the school is very short, whereas the application process is very long; the implementation of the projects is burdened by many bureaucratic obstacles.

Employers believe that the enterprise should have a decisive word in the traineeship / apprenticeship program. It must be consistent with the real processes in the company.

The schools think that employers must participate in the development of a training program that lasts a certain amount of hours. Unfortunately, employers are not prepared to design such programs.

Employers also have noticed that each enterprise uses different methods of training in apprenticeship. There is no regulated methodological assistance. Each employer looks for assistance individually.

Schools require consistency between the enterprise and the education institution regarding the teaching methods.

Employers state that representatives of the company should be involved in evaluating the results. There is no clear regulation on the evaluation process. The evaluation should be done together by the employers and the training organization.

Employers face the problem of the discrepancy between theoretical learning at school and the real needs in the manufacturing plant. When the appointed trainee is motivated to do the work, the

traineeship can satisfy the needs of the company. Trainees remain at the company after the completion of the traineeship.

4. Parallels and differences of the apprenticeship development situation of UPPRETAIL project partners countries with the DEVAPPRENT project partners countries

Comparing the development of apprenticeship in the initial VET systems of the UPPRETAIL project and partner countries with the apprenticeship situation in the DEVAPPRENT partner countries, the following similarities and differences were observed:

1. Different levels of apprenticeship development and implementation in the partner countries of both projects. In UPPRETAIL project there are cases of more developed apprenticeships and their application in Italy and Spain, while in DEVAPPRENT project we can identify a range of countries with different institutional regimes of apprenticeship (Germany, France, UK and the Netherlands). However, the differences of apprenticeship development in UPPRETAIL partner countries are not as big as in DEVAPPRENT project, what makes the policy learning easier by sharing the experiences.

2. In the DEVAPPRENT project we can clearly identify the donors of the experience of apprenticeship development (Germany, France, UK and the Netherlands) and the receiving country (Lithuania), while in the UPPRETAIL project all project partner countries are in the process of development and implementation of apprenticeship schemes in their VET systems.

3. The DEVAPPRENT project partner countries represent a variety of institutional regimes of apprenticeship training (enterprise based apprenticeships in the UK, dual apprenticeships in Germany and Netherlands, a mix of enterprise and school oriented apprenticeships in France), while in the UPPRETAIL partner countries the institutional models of apprenticeship are not so diverse and focus on the mix of the initial VET school-based and enterprise based training.

To what extent the policy learning recommendations of the DEVAPPRENT project can be applicable for the development of apprenticeship in the retail trade sector of UPPRETAIL partner countries?

Here we must take into consideration two main features:

1) In general, the situation of introduction and development of apprenticeship in such countries as Lithuania, Bulgaria, Portugal, and (partially) Spain and Italy (depending on the regions) has a lot of common features. Therefore in principle, some recommendations proposed by DEVAPPRENT guidelines could be very interesting and relevant for UPPRETAIL project. However, they have to be critically reviewed in the light of the context conditions of the UPPRETAIL partner countries.

2) The UPPRETAIL project is focused on the development of apprenticeship in the retail trade sector, while the DEVAPPRENT project aims to provide guidelines for the implementation and development of apprenticeship on the national level. Therefore the guidelines and recommendations of the DEVAPPRENT must be reviewed and redesigned referring to the specific conditions and requirements of the retail trade sector in the project partner countries.

5. Concluding recommendations for the designing of guidelines

The comparison of the national reports on the development of apprenticeship in the retail sector in the partner countries permits to define the following topics and issues of the guidelines:

1. Recommendations of the state policy in the organization and funding of apprenticeship: roles and responsibilities of the Government and state institutions.
2. Guidelines for the development of the social partnership and involvement of all stakeholders in the organization and management of apprenticeship. How social partnership could ensure sustainability of apprenticeship schemes taking into account the quantity of involved partners and the quality of cooperation between them?
3. Recommendations on the specific measures and schemes of apprenticeship designed for the entry of unemployed youth in the labour market. What should be the specific features and elements of such schemes? What are the factors of their effectiveness?
4. Guidelines for the adaptation of apprenticeship schemes for the small and medium enterprises by increasing their flexibility. What are the specific requirements of implementation of apprenticeship in the SME's and how these requirements should be met?
5. Guidelines on the orientation of apprenticeship to the satisfaction of the future needs of skills in the sector. What arrangements in the field of curriculum design, organization and management of apprenticeship schemes could help to satisfy the future skills needs?
6. Guidelines to ensure the permeability between the apprenticeship and other education and training pathways through curriculum design and organisation of training.
7. Guidelines for the curriculum design of apprenticeship in the retail sector seeking to provide recommendations on how to ensure coherence of theoretical training part to the needs of companies and how to combine the supervision and tutoring of apprentices with the building of their autonomy and responsibility competences.
8. Guidelines for the development and implementation of the quality framework and process to monitor and evaluate the quality of apprenticeship courses in retail sector.

9. Guidelines for the identification of the retail sector functional profiles or company profiles for which apprenticeship modality is adequate.

10. Recommendations on the requirements of the main skills and competences which young people must develop or consolidate before the first contact with the company for apprenticeship training.