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# Towards a European quality framework for apprenticeships and work-based learning



Best practices  
and trade union  
contributions

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# Foreword

**B**y the end of 2012, more than 25 million people were unemployed throughout the European Union. This is an average for the entire European Union and conceals dire figures for some Member States – 25.0% for Spain, 24.3 % for Greece and 15.9% for Portugal. The youth unemployment rate (for 15-24 year olds) is much worse. It stood at 22.8%, a figure which conceals truly alarming figures for some Member States – 55.3% for Greece, 53.2% for Spain, 37.7% for Portugal, 35.3% for Italy, 34.0% for Slovakia and 30.4% for Ireland. Moreover the situation is getting worse, not better.

Youth unemployment has sky-rocketed, and in some countries there is talk of a 'lost generation' of young people without work and with little hope of finding any.

Trade unions throughout Europe are urgently demanding recovery and employment plans for investing in jobs for young people. They are also demanding measures to support the transition of young people from school to the world of work, and apprenticeships offer real practical assistance.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) launched a project 'Towards a European quality framework for apprenticeship and work-based learning: best practices and trade union contributions' at the beginning of 2013. This project aims to identify the characteristics that trade unions share for establishing quality apprenticeships in Europe and to situate the institution of apprenticeship within the wider context of education and training provision for young people as they prepare to enter the labour market.

Unionlearn agreed to carry out a study to understand the important contribution that trade unions make to ensure the successful design and delivery of apprenticeship systems throughout Europe.

We would like to thank our colleagues: Fred Grindrod, from unionlearn, and Agnes Roman from the European Trade Union Confederation, for establishing the methodology for this study; the colleagues from the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group who supported this initiative and coordinated meetings at the national level: Isabel Coenen (FNV, Netherlands), Eamon Devoy (ICTU, Ireland), Fred Grindrod (TUC, United Kingdom), Milena Micheletti (UIL, Italy), Juan Carlos Morales (UGT, Spain), Hermann Nehls (DGB, Germany), Nikos Nikolaou (SEK, Cyprus), Yuliya Simeonova (KNSB, Bulgaria), Morten Smistrup (LO – Denmark) and Kaja Toomsalu (EAKL, Estonia); and finally our colleague Jeff Bridgford for carrying out the interviews at the national level, analysing the data and writing this report.

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# Introduction

**A**pprenticeships cannot solve the problems of youth unemployment, but they can bridge the gap between school and the labour market. Apprenticeships offer a tried and tested way of helping young people into work. How do trade unions know this? They know it simply because they, along with employers' organisations, are closely involved, at different levels, in the governance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeship systems. This is the case for all the ten EU Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom) surveyed in this study.

This trade union involvement covers a variety of different activities: ensuring that VET programmes correspond to the needs of the labour market; contributing to the development of professional qualifications; advising on the content of training, both in training institutions and at the workplace; negotiating terms and conditions for apprentices, particularly wages; providing guidance for apprentices via trade union representatives and works councillors; monitoring the quality of work-based training; deciding on the funding arrangements for work-based training by means of bilateral training funds.

This study will primarily illustrate the contribution that trade unions are making throughout Europe to the success of apprenticeship systems. After a brief presentation of the labour market situation for young people in Europe, which in some countries is catastrophic, it will examine the belated attempts by EU policy-makers to introduce measures to support apprenticeships. It will attempt to shed some light on the ways in which apprenticeships are defined at the national and European levels. Some consideration will be given to an examination of the quantitative aspects – how many apprentices are there and are they declining in number because of the downturn in the economy?

The stakes are high for trade unions. The existence of a 'lost generation' in many countries undermines trade unionism, and the study will reflect upon certain issues of practical interest to trade unions and apprentices (membership, pay and conditions).

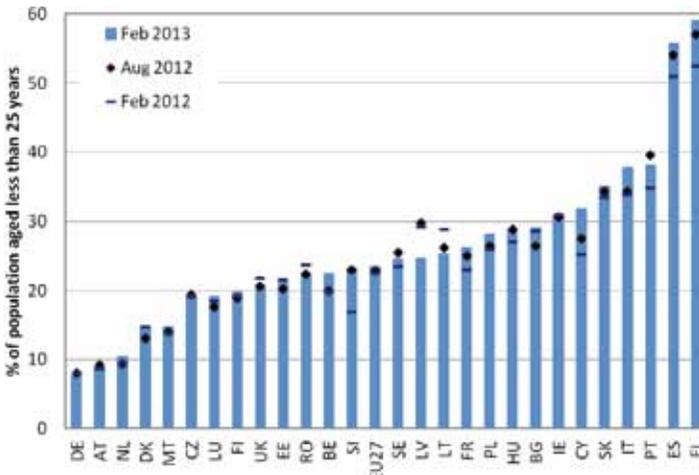
Finally, on the basis of desk research and extensive interviews at the national level the study will analyse the extent of trade union involvement in the governance of the apprenticeship systems of the ten Member States, and bring to the fore some trade union proposals for assuring the quality of apprenticeships at the national and European levels. These proposals will flow into the ETUC Quality Framework for Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning (Appendix 1). In Appendix 2 there will be a collection of ten 1-page summaries providing the most salient features of apprenticeships in each Member State and a short, hopefully accessible, guide to the issues at stake.

# The European labour market

Unemployment is on the increase, and by the end of 2012 there were more than 25 million people unemployed throughout the European Union, a year-on-year increase of 2 million. The unemployment rate had increased to 10.4%. One in ten of the EU population had no job. This is an average for the entire European Union and conceals dire figures for some Member States – 25.0% for Spain, 24.3 % for Greece and 15.9% for Portugal. Moreover 44.4% of these 25 million people have been unemployed for more than 12 months. <sup>1</sup>

However the youth unemployment rate (for 15-24 year olds) in the EU-27 was much worse. It stood at 22.8%. This means that more than one out of every five young persons in the labour force was not employed, but available for a job. However they had no job. This figure conceals truly alarming figures for some Member States however – 55.3% for Greece, 53.2% for Spain, 37.7% for Portugal, 35.3% for Italy, 34.0% for Slovakia and 30.4% for Ireland.

**Table 1 - Youth unemployment rates for the EU Member States, February 2012, August 2012 and February 2013**



Notes: \*Data for January 2013 instead of February 2013: EE, EL, HU, UK. \*\* Data for December 2012 instead of February 2013: CY, LV, RO, SI. Source: European Commission, *Fact Sheet: Youth Unemployment. 2013*

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat, *European Union Labour force survey - annual results 2012*

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More than one in two young persons is not employed in Greece and Spain, and these are national averages, so it can be expected that in some regions youth unemployment is even higher.

And the trend is upward, as can be seen from Table 1, especially in Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain.

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## The European policy-making response

**E**U policy-makers have been slow to respond.

The Europe 2020 strategy, claims that it will deliver growth that is 'smart, through more effective investments in education, research and innovation; sustainable, thanks to a decisive move towards a low-carbon economy; and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction.'

The Europe 2020 Strategy has been overtaken by events however, and primarily the need to save the euro. The measures proposed, and even imposed on some euro-zone countries, have exacerbated the employment situation, and it is difficult to see where growth is going to come from.

The Europe 2020 Strategy set a goal of labour market participation of 75 % for women and men aged 20 to 64 by 2020. In 2012 the EU employment rate stood at 68.5 %.

According to the European Commission, a very substantial gap between the 75 % target and projected 2020 employment rates under a no policy change scenario exists in several countries. Several groups of countries can be distinguished according to how far they are from their national 2020 targets, and in some countries the targets do not seem feasible - Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. 'As only marginal increases are expected for 2012, 2013 and 2014 reaching the Europe 2020 target will require considerable effort.'<sup>2</sup>

Where will this effort come from? Who is going to make the effort?

Suddenly European policy-makers have come up with a flurry of new initiatives. In its Communication dated 19 June 2013 'Working together for Europe's young people - A call to action on youth unemployment' the European Commission identifies a number of different proposals.

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, *Europe 2020 Targets: Employment Rate*, p 3

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One is the establishment of the Youth Guarantee, which was agreed by the Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013.<sup>3</sup> It recommends that, *inter alia*, Member States should 'ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'.

Another is the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which was agreed by the Council of Ministers on 27-28 June 2013. It will provide €6 billion for young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in regions experiencing youth unemployment rates above 25%.<sup>4</sup>

A third is the relaunch of the Youth Employment Action Teams who will provide advice on how EU funding from the European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative could be used to implement the Youth Guarantee. The European Commission has set up a helpdesk to provide strategic, operational and policy advice on setting up, running, improving or evaluating apprenticeship and traineeship schemes/programmes. It offers:

- an enquiry service via a website form, email or phone
- one-to-one advice and tailored consultancy from specialist policy experts
- regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- knowledge bank of relevant information.<sup>5</sup>

A fourth is easing the transition from education to work, and here the emphasis is on apprenticeships. According to the European Commission, 'experience has shown that countries with strong, attractive VET systems and especially those with well-established apprenticeship systems and strong work-based learning tend to perform better in terms of facilitating the transition from school to work and keeping youth unemployment down. Improving the supply and quality of apprenticeships is therefore an important part of the youth employment strategy'.<sup>6</sup>

It would however be unwise to suggest that there is a deterministic link between apprenticeships and low levels of youth unemployment. Ireland, for example, has had a relatively well functioning apprenticeship system, 'a high quality well-regulated apprenticeship offer' according to an ILO publication,<sup>7</sup> but high levels of unemployment and youth unemployment (30.4% in 2012, as can be seen from the figures above). There are clearly many other factors influencing economic development and employment, but there is some consensus that apprenticeships have an important role to play.

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<sup>3</sup> Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01)

<sup>4</sup> Council Conclusions, EUCO 104/2/13 REV 2 CO EUR 9 CO\_CL 6

<sup>5</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1045&intPageId=1867&langId=en>

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, *Working together for Europe's young people - A call to action on youth unemployment* COM(2013) 447 final, p 9

<sup>7</sup> ILO, *Overview of Apprenticeship systems and issues - ILO contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment*, 2012, p 20.

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The European Commission has called on the Council of Ministers within the context of the European Semester to approve a series of Country-Specific Recommendations for 19 Member States to combat youth unemployment through inter alia active labour market policies, reinforcement of public employment services and support for training and apprenticeship schemes. More specifically the European Commission has called on Denmark to increase the number of apprenticeships, on France to promote apprenticeships, on Lithuania to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes, on Latvia to improve the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships, on Poland to increase the availability of apprenticeships and work-based learning, on Sweden to step up efforts to facilitate the transition from school to work, including via a wider use of work-based learning, apprenticeships and other forms of contracts combining employment and education, and on the United Kingdom to increase the quality and duration of apprenticeships.

The European Commission has also called on Member States to include apprenticeship reform within their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans and to mobilise EU funding to support this objective; and to set up strong partnerships at national level for dual learning bringing together authorities responsible for education and employment, social partners, chambers, VET providers, youth and student organisations, employment services and agencies managing EU funding.

It remains to be seen what impact these measures will have.

In addition the European Commission announced that it was launching a European Alliance for Apprenticeships 'to help improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships and to change mind-sets towards work-based learning',<sup>8</sup> and on 2 July 2013 the European Commission formally launched a European Alliance for Apprenticeships – a declaration of the European Social Partners, the European Commission and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, who committed themselves to:

- consider our common commitment and mutual trust as a precondition for the launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships;
- contribute to the access to, supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships across the EU by encouraging the setting up, reviving or modernising of apprenticeship schemes that follow the following principles:
  - effective partnerships between education and training institutions and enterprises, and the recognition of their respective roles
  - involvement of social partners, and, as appropriate, intermediary bodies such as chambers of commerce, industry and crafts, professional organisations, sectoral organisations in the governance of apprenticeship systems
  - high quality of the qualifications and learning process
  - integration of apprenticeship schemes into national/regional education and training systems and a clear regulatory framework, clarifying the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party involved, in the context of national practices, labour law and collective agreements;

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<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/index_en.htm)

- 
- contribute to changing mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning by promoting the benefits of apprenticeship systems.

The European Social Partners agreed at the European level to focus their efforts within the next 6 months on the following fields of action:

- undertaking 'capacity building' in their own constituencies, spreading experience and good practice among the national member organisation;
- motivating, advising and challenging member organisations to support the aims of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships by getting involved in the establishment and improvement of apprenticeship systems, for example:
  - in the development and improvement of curricula, to ensure that apprenticeships remain attuned to skills needs of the labour market in quality assurance and assessment of apprenticeships and working conditions, where appropriate
  - in cooperating with schools and employment services to give young people and their parents the opportunity to make informed choices about apprenticeships as an educational pathway
  - in supporting the learning processes of apprentices in the workplace through adequate measures, such as training of in-company mentors and coaching of apprentices

- motivating, advising and challenging enterprises to support the aims of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, for example by:
  - building upon the improved framework conditions in order to increase the supply and quality of apprenticeship positions in their own enterprise and supply chain
  - sharing experience and support with other enterprises
  - promoting role models showing the career opportunities that apprentices bring individuals
- raising awareness of employers and of young people of the benefits of apprenticeships;
- disseminating information and supporting social partner action to ensure more attractive conditions for enterprises and apprentices and proper use of apprenticeships in compliance with applicable rights and obligations;
- promoting the use of the EU funds, in particular the European Social Fund, to introduce or improve Member States' dual-learning apprenticeship systems;
- at the end of 2013, reporting on the implementation of their commitments and announcing the follow up in 2014 and beyond.

This is clearly an ambitious list for the first six-month reporting period.

These developments at the EU level were doubtless inspired by multilateral and bilateral initiatives taken by the German Government '*pour encourager les autres*.' On the invitation of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Slovakia and Latvia, in association with

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the European Commission, signed a memorandum in Berlin on 11 December 2012. This Memorandum included concrete measures for introducing a vocational education system based on Germany's model of dual training. For the initial phase, the participating countries agreed on the following concrete steps:

- 30,000 exchanges (internships, training phases) will be realised;
- 30 regional vocational training networks will be created with German involvement;
- six political consultancy projects will be initiated;
- a minimum of 10 study trips will allow experts in the action fields specified by the Memorandum to exchange ideas and gather information on site;
- a German pool of consultancy experts and a peer learning platform will be created for coordination and successive development of cooperation. In addition to the current funding for international cooperation in vocational education and training, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research will make 10 million euros available between 2013 and 2014 for the implementation of the Memorandum, which will also be supplemented by contributions from partner countries;

- the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training will become the central office for the coordination of international cooperation in vocational education and training.

Further bilateral agreements were signed subsequently by Germany and Italy and Germany and Spain.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of policy proposals, the wind seems set fair now for the development and further development of apprenticeships in Europe.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bmbf.de/en/17127.php>

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## Apprenticeships - Definitions

However policy makers are adrift in relatively uncharted waters. There is no single agreed and accepted definition of what an apprenticeship is. Moreover there has been no concerted effort to try and produce one.

At the national level there are different definitions.

In Italy apprenticeship is defined as an employment contract for an indefinite period aimed at the training and employment of young people (article 1 of the Consolidated Act for Apprenticeships - *Testo Unico sull'Apprendistato*). It proposes three forms of apprenticeship:

- *apprendistato per la qualifica e per il diploma professionale* (training apprenticeship) for 15-25 year olds (article 3);
- *apprendistato professionalizzante o contratto di mestiere* (work-oriented apprenticeship) for 18-29 years olds (article 4);
- *apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca* (advanced training and research apprenticeship for 18-29 year old – (article 5).

In Germany apprenticeships 'shall, through a systematic training programme, impart the vocational skills, knowledge and qualifications (vocational competence) necessary to engage in a form of skilled occupational activity in a changing working world. It should also enable trainees to acquire the necessary occupational experience' (article 1.3 of the Vocational Training Act - *Berufsbildungsgesetz*).

In the United Kingdom, there is no specific legal definition of an apprenticeship, but of the conditions that are required to complete an apprenticeship, for example in England, as follows: that the person has entered into an apprenticeship agreement in connection with the apprenticeship framework; that at the date of that agreement the framework was a recognised English framework; that the person has completed a course of training for the competencies qualification identified in the framework; that, throughout the duration of the course, the person was working under the apprenticeship agreement, and that the person meets the requirements specified in the framework for the purpose of the issue of an apprenticeship certificate (article 13 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act). According to the glossary of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 'apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on- and off-the-job training leading to nationally recognised qualifications. As an employee, apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace'.

In Denmark there is no specific definition of an apprenticeship as such but, according to the Danish Vocational Education and Training Act (article 1), apprenticeship training should:

- motivate young people to be trained and ensure that all young people who want to engage in vocational training have access to it and can select their training path from a wide variety of programmes;

- provide young people with training that is a basis for their future work, including self-employment;
- encourage young people's interest and ability to participate actively in a democratic society and to contribute to their personal development;
- meet the social needs of vocational and general qualifications, taking into account occupational and social developments, including developments in business structure, labour relations, workplace organisation and technology, and an innovative and creative workforce;
- provide knowledge of international affairs and information about work and education abroad;
- provide a basis for further education.

At the European level, an attempt has been made by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, a specialist agency set up by the European Union, to define an apprenticeship – a 'systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training institutions. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.'<sup>10</sup>

This definition highlights the importance of a contractual relationship between the employer and the apprentice. The former provides some form of payment, and the training, which is systematic and long-term

and takes place both at the workplace and in a training institution, leads to some form of occupation. There is however no mention of a certificate at the end of the process. The apprenticeship leads to an occupation but not necessarily to a job of work and employment.

An earlier definition by Eurostat defines apprentices as 'all employees who do not participate fully in the production process of the unit because they are working under an apprentice's contract or because of the fact that they are undertaking vocational training impinging significantly on their productivity'. Here however there is the notion of work.<sup>11</sup>

A recent study (2012), *Apprenticeship Supply in the Member States of the European Union*, commissioned by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission helps to muddy the waters by introducing the notion of 'apprentice-type schemes' with a quite different definition – 'those forms of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) that formally combine and alternate company based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with school based education (periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training institution), whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised initial VET qualifications.'<sup>12</sup> Here the emphasis is clearly on IVET.

<sup>10</sup> CEDEFOP, *Terminology of European education and training policy – A selection of 100 key terms*, Thessaloniki, 2008, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6228>

<sup>12</sup> European Commission, *Apprenticeship Supply in the Member States of the European Union*, 2012, p. 22.

Table 2 - Differences between Apprenticeships and Traineeships

	APPRENTICESHIP	TRAINEESHIP
Scope	Full qualifying professional or vocational education and training profile	Complementing educational programme or individual CV
Goal	Professional profile/qualification	Documented practical experience
Educational level	Usually EQF level 3-5	Traineeships can be found as part of programmes on all EQF levels – common forms in (pre) vocational education, in higher education and after graduation (sometimes compulsory)
Content	Acquisition of the full set of knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation	Vocational and/or work/career orientation, acquisition of parts of knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation or a profession
On-the-job learning	Equally important to coursework	Usually complementing coursework or optional extra
Length	Determined, middle- to long-term Usually up to four years	Varying, short- to middle-term Usually less than one year
Employment status	Employee status Contracted/employed apprentice	Student/trainee often based on an agreement with employer or school; sometimes volunteer status or not clearly defined status Student/trainee often based on an agreement with employer or school
Compensation	Remunerated – amount collectively negotiated or set by law Apprenticeship allowance which takes into account net costs and benefits for the individual and the employer	Varying remuneration, often unpaid Unregulated financial compensation
Governance	Strongly regulated, often on a tripartite basis	Unregulated or partly regulated
Actors	Often social partners, training providers	Individuals, companies, state, educational institutions

Source: European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors Brussels, 2013*

The waters are further muddied by another more recent study (2013), *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors*, also commissioned by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. It does not define apprenticeships and traineeships as such. It does however summarise the distinct features in broad and general terms: content, on-the-job training, length, employment status, compensation, governance and actors,<sup>13</sup> as can be seen in Table 2.

In Part III of this study the summary country fiches often fail to apply this distinction and bundle many manifestly IVET-based traineeships schemes into the apprenticeship section. Further confusion is provided by the fact that schemes described as apprenticeships in the second study are not considered to be apprenticeships (according to national definitions) in the first study where they are considered to be 'apprenticeship-type'. The most glaring example would be Spain. 'Contracts for training and apprenticeships' (contrato para la formacion y el aprendizaje), 'work placement contracts' (contrato en prácticas), 'mid-level training cycles' (ciclos formativos de grado medio), 'upper-level training cycles' (ciclos formativos de grado superior) are all considered to be apprenticeships in the second study but 'apprenticeship-type' in the former. Another example would be Poland. '2/3-year basic vocational school' (zasadnicza szkola zawodowa), '4-year technical upper secondary school' (technikum), '2-year post upper

secondary school' (szkola policealna), '3-year specialised upper secondary school offering education in specialisations of general vocational education' (liceum profilowane), '3-year supplementary secondary technical school' (technikum uzupelniajace) are considered as apprenticeships in the latter but not in the former.

This confusion is particularly regrettable, now that the European Union is committed to providing funding for apprenticeships. Does this mean that the EU will not be subsidising apprenticeships in some countries at all, but 'apprenticeship-type' schemes, which are in fact IVET schemes? Does this matter? It does, because through its policy proposals the EU is attempting to combat youth unemployment. There is evidence from the OECD that 'apprenticeship and other dual vocational education and training (VET) programmes appear to be efficient school-to-work pathways, particularly for secondary students.'<sup>14</sup> Moreover according to the second study commissioned by the European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors*, 'our analysis by country has shown that apprenticeships have consistently yielded positive employment outcomes and not only in countries typically associated with the dual training system like Germany and Austria.'<sup>15</sup> The evidence is considerably less compelling for traineeships.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors*, 2013, p 1

<sup>14</sup> OCDE, *Off to a good start? Jobs for Youth, Position Paper*, OCDE, Paris. 2010. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/34/46717876.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Op cit, p 2

<sup>16</sup> Op cit, p 5

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# Apprenticeships - A Quantitative Overview

How important is the sector? How many young people are engaged in apprenticeships? The 2012 European Commission study makes an estimate of the number of apprentices (according to national definitions) and comes up with a total of 3,686,900 for the EU 27 for 2009. In addition it estimates that there are 5,700,200 'apprentice-type' scheme students, according to its own definition of 'apprentice-type' i.e. 'those forms of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) that formally combine and alternate company-based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with school-based education (periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training institution), and whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised initial VET qualifications'. In all, this comes to a total of 9,419,800 young people.

The figures are difficult to estimate, given the uncertainty as regards the various Commission definitions. The figures are also difficult to reconcile because there is some discrepancy with other national figures.

In Italy, the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers (*Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori - ISFOL*) has a figure of 645,385, but this is for 2008, and a figure of

594,668 for 2009.<sup>17</sup> In Denmark, the Ministry for Children and Education has figures of 88,172 for 2009.<sup>18</sup> In the Netherlands there are 167,100 young people following the work-based pathway (*BBL - beroepsbegeleidende leerweg*), which would be more readily comparable with apprenticeships, and 348,400 following the school-based pathway (*BOL - beroepsopleidende leerweg*).<sup>19</sup> In Germany, according to the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung*, there were 1,571,457 apprentices in 2009.<sup>20</sup> In Ireland there were significantly less apprentices – in 2009 there were 1,535 registrations, and even if the registrations are added from 2008 and 2007 and 2006, the total apprenticeship population only comes to 20,369 in all.<sup>21</sup>

The trend is mixed. In some countries there has been a calamitous decline. In Ireland, for example, there was a total apprenticeship population of 13,267 in 2010, 7,811 in 2011 and 5,480 in 2012 (on the basis of accumulated registrations over the previous 4-year period), just slightly more than a quarter of the 2009 figure. The construction industry, which was in free-fall after the housing crisis, had 4,514 registrations in 2006, but only 348 in 2009 and 222 in 2012.

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17 *Giovani occupati con contratto di apprendistato - anni 2003-2010 (valori assoluti)*,

[http://www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro\\_professioni/apprendistato/approfondimenti/statistiche-1](http://www.isfol.it/temi/Lavoro_professioni/apprendistato/approfondimenti/statistiche-1) (retrieved 4.7.2013)

18 <http://statweb.uni-c.dk/Databanken/uvvmDataWeb/ShowReport.aspx?report=EAK-tilgang-erhudd> (retrieved 4.7.2013)

19 Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, *Key figures 2007-2011*, Den Haag, 2012. p 11

20 Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2013 - Vorversion*, p 122

21 FAS, *Annual Report 2013*, p 23

Table 3 - Estimate of number of students in apprenticeship-type studies by EU 27 Member States, secondary education, 2009 (thousands) (\*)

	APPRENTICESHIP STUDENTS (according to national definitions) (1)	APPRENTICESHIP- TYPE SCHEME STUDENTS (2)	TOTAL APPRENTICESHIP- TYPE STUDENTS (1+2)
Austria	132.0	170.0	302.0
Belgium	22.2	613.3	635.6
Bulgaria	1.3	163.5	164.8
Cyprus	0.3	0.9	1.2
Czech Republic	-	347.4	347.4
Denmark	95.0	-	127.7
Estonia	0.6	-	0.6
Finland	70.0	181.9	251.9
France	427.7	605.6	1,033.2
Germany	1,659.3	25.4	1,684.7
Greece	14.0	-	14.0
Hungary	45.6	10.9	56.5
Ireland	26.2	30.0	56.2
Italy	644.6	976.6	1,621.2
Latvia	0.4	34.9	35.3
Lithuania	0.3	22.4	22.7
Luxembourg	7.3	6.0	13.3
Malta	0.7	7.0	7.7
Netherlands	171.9	351.8	523.8
Poland	-	851.1	851.1
Portugal	14.6	110.0	124.7
Romania (**)	-	-	-
Slovakia	2.0	-	2.0
Slovenia	64.2	-	64.2
Spain	-	271.3	271.3
Sweden	7.0	170.9	177.9
United Kingdom	279.7	749.1	1,028.8
European Union (27)	3,686.9	5,700.2	9,419.8

(\*) Data excludes ISCED level 5 studies, with the only exception of the French data on apprentices.

(\*\*) No data available for apprenticeship students in Romania since the implementation of this type of training is very recent in time

Source: European Commission, Apprenticeship Supply in the Member States of the European Union, 2012

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In others, the decline has been dramatic. In Germany, the number of apprentices fell to 1,508,328 in 2010 and 1,460,658 in 2011. In Italy the figure fell to 541,874 in 2010, and there is a provisional figure of 504,558 for 2011.

In Cyprus and Estonia, admittedly countries with very small numbers of apprentices, there has also been a decline. In Cyprus 178 young people were enrolled as apprentices in 2011/2012 and 56 in 2012/2013 - the final year of the old scheme, and at the same time 90 young people enrolled in the first year of the New Modern Apprenticeship system (2012/2013). In Estonia the figure dipped to 564 in 2010/11, and was at 566 in 2011/2012.

In other countries however, the United Kingdom for example, there has been a significant increase, with 806,500 apprentices in 2011/2012, 21.1% more compared with the previous year's figures. There were 457,200 apprenticeship starts in 2010/2011 and 520,600 in 2011/2012, an increase of 13.9% compared to 2010/2011.<sup>22</sup> In Spain, which is just starting to offer apprenticeships, the new dual vocational training system is in an experimental phase. It is planning to train 4,000 young people over two years, with the participation of 120 training institutions and 550 enterprises.

In other countries there was a small increase: in the Netherlands 169,100 for BBL and 356,200 for BOL in 2010, and 159,200 and 356,200 respectively in 2011.

In Denmark, the Ministry for Children and Education has figures of 91,392 in 2010 but 90,994 in 2011.

The comment heard most frequently during the interviews for this study, from trade unionists, employers and representatives of the public authorities, referred to the availability of workplaces, and this comment was made in all countries regardless of their success or failure in terms of economic growth. As the economic crisis bites, the number of potential workplaces for apprentices declines. In Ireland for example it was necessary for FÁS, the Irish apprenticeship agency, to set up special measures, the Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme, to take on apprentices who had been made redundant. The success of the proposals put forward by the European Commission and agreed by the Council of Ministers will be measured in part by the availability of workplaces and the willingness of employers to take on apprentices.

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<sup>22</sup> Department for Business Innovation Et Skills, Quarterly Statistical First Release, 27 March 2013, p 7

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# Trade Unions and Apprentices

The stakes are high for trade unions. The existence of a 'lost generation' in many countries undermines trade unionism. 'Losing a generation' demonstrates that the influence exercised by trade unions over big issues such as mass unemployment is distinctly limited; that their bargaining power is drastically reduced; that they cannot in fact defend existing members adequately; and that they are cutting themselves off from potential sources of future membership.

Apprentices that are employed have a contract with the employer and on this basis are considered as workers for the period of their apprenticeship. This means that they can become members of trade unions, but it is not possible to ascertain whether they actually do. Trade unions sometimes collect membership data on young people, but not specifically for apprentices. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that few actually do, and this is part of a wider problem for trade unions of organising young people.

Some trade unions make a specific effort to recruit apprentices. FNV Bondgenoten, for example, has a Youth Marketing and Communications Department, which organises visits to all training institutions in the Netherlands and in this way presents the work of the union to approximately 30 classes per month, and more (70) in November at the beginning of the school year.

Some trade unions have reduced membership rates for apprentices. In Denmark, for example, HK, the Union for Commercial and Clerical Employees, provides free membership for apprentices, as does the Irish Technical, Electrical & Engineering Union (TEEU). In the Netherlands FNV Bouw, the construction union, and in FNV Bondgenoten, the general industrial and services union, provide free membership for the first year. In the former the services provided are limited, but in the latter, apprentices also have access to legal advice. In the second year the apprentice rate is lower than the normal rate - € 6,31 per month for 17 year olds in FNV Bouw (July 2012). In the British trade union Unite, the membership rate for 1<sup>st</sup> year apprentices is £0.56 per week or £2.43 per month (for fulltime workers the rate is £2.78 per week or £12.05 per month). In UNISON, the public service union, the membership rate is £10 per year, and in the case study visited (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) the branch pays the first year's membership subscription. In other countries, Germany and Italy for example, apprentices pay the same percentage of their salary as fulltime workers.

Some trade unions provide information for apprentices. IG Metall has a website providing information on all the occupations and training opportunities available in its sector (*Beruf oder Berufung: Welcher Job passt zu Dir?*).<sup>23</sup> The TUC has produced an Apprentices Toolkit for union representatives

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/jupo-ausbildungsberufe-3220.htm> (retrieved 9.7.2013)

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which includes fact sheets on the following: negotiating and bargaining; the business case; apprenticeship frameworks; apprenticeship levels; pay; working time and time off for study; equality and diversity; health and safety; mentoring; case studies.<sup>24</sup> 3F, the United Union of Danish Workers (*Fagligt Fælles Forbund*), a cross-sectoral trade union and the largest in Denmark, has a website providing advice for apprentices and information about apprenticeship places and training schemes.<sup>25</sup> Part of the TEEU website is devoted to the service that it provides for apprentices. It negotiates wages, conditions of employment and apprenticeship terms. It provides advice and assistance on paid release, travel and subsistence and training, testing and certification. It protects apprentices from bullying, discrimination at work.<sup>26</sup> FNV Bouw produces a magazine BAHM and a website for young people.<sup>27</sup> In Italy, in the banking sector for example, UILCA has produced a short booklet for apprentices.<sup>28</sup>

Some trade unions provide advice on training opportunities, and in the Berlin area, for example, the Youth Secretary in IG Metall organises a meeting four times a year for member and non-members to discuss, *inter alia*, training developments and opportunities in the metalworking sector. The TUC also organises information meetings specifically for apprentices and notably runs an annual *Voice of Apprentices* Conference each November. The TUC trains Union Learning Representatives to know how to deal with

apprenticeship issues. The TUC also employs a trade union officer in six English regions to provide advice for apprentices.

Some trade unions, FNV Bouw for example, offer apprentices modest financial rewards - 'book money' and a bonus (approximately €100) when they successfully finish their apprenticeships.

Finally, and importantly, where apprentices are considered workers, their demands are reflected in collective bargaining agreements negotiated by their trade unions, examples of which are quoted throughout this report.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/index.cfm?mins=255&minors=254&majorsubjectid=2> (retrieved 9.7.2013)

<sup>25</sup> <http://forsiden.3f.dk/article/20060423/UDDANNELSE/60423002?profile=2221&template=grupperne> and <http://forsiden.3f.dk/article/20050316/LONARB01/50316009?profile=2232> (retrieved 9.7.2013)

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.teeu.ie/0006\\_3.asp](http://www.teeu.ie/0006_3.asp) (retrieved 9.7.2013)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.bahm.nl/>

<sup>28</sup> UILCA, *Apprendisti in Banca*, Rome, 2012

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## Trade Unions and Apprentices' Pay

Apprentices' pay is generally covered by collective agreements which trade unions have negotiated or by the minimum legal wage. However, in some countries, these rates are very low, and in some countries anecdotal evidence suggests that these rates are partially or completely ignored.

In Germany apprentices' pay is covered by sectoral or regional wage agreements. The rates vary accordingly, and for example in 2012, according to figures from the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung*, the highest wage in West Germany in 2012 was for an apprentice bricklayer (an average of €986 per month) and the lowest wage in West Germany was for an apprentice hairdresser (€454). In East Germany the highest wage was for an apprentice media technologist (€905 – the same as in West Germany) and the lowest, also for an apprentice hairdresser (€269).<sup>29</sup> In the metalworking sector in Berlin in 2013, for example, an apprentice is paid €819 in the first year, €868 in the second, €925 in the third and €961 in the fourth. Workplaces that are not covered by wage agreements can pay less, but by tacit agreement only up to 20% less. Conversely, in the retail sector some employers (Aldi and Lidl, for example) pay more than the national rate – €730.

In Ireland the construction industry agreement, for example, which was signed in 2011, stipulates that 1st year apprentices are paid 33% of the national rate for craftsmen; 2nd years 50%; 3rd years 75%; and 4th years 90%.

In Italy apprentices are covered by collective agreements, and according to the 2012 Consolidated Text for Apprentices Act (2012) may be promoted up the pay scale to within two levels of the maximum decided by the collective agreement for that pay grade, if they are carrying out the duties or functions of a skilled worker. As an alternative they may be paid on a percentage basis.

In the Netherlands the construction industry national agreement as of January 2012, for example, stipulates wages for apprentices running from €96.00 a week to €67.20, according to age and seniority. Interestingly, in order to offset the difficulties experienced by the construction industry in the wake of the financial crisis, the trade unions and employers agreed to a small temporary reduction in the pay of apprentice carpenters. Not all companies are covered by collective agreements however, and in these circumstances apprentices should receive the minimum legal wage. There is some anecdotal evidence that this is not always the case.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.bibb.de/ausbildungsverguetungen-2012> (retrieved 9.7.2013)

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In the United Kingdom pay is clearly regulated. There is a National Minimum Wage for Apprentices. As of October 2013 the national minimum rates are £2.68 per hour for under-19s and for over-19s in their first year of apprenticeship. Over-19s (not in their first year) should receive more - the rate that applies to their age group; £5.03 for 18-20 year olds and £6.31 for 21 year olds and over. These rates may increase for those covered by collective agreements. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills commissioned a survey of apprentices' pay in 2011, and 11,020 apprentices took part. It came up with a median rate of hourly pay of £5.87. Median gross weekly pay was £200. The highest rates were for apprentices in team leadership and management (£8.33 per hour), and the lowest for apprentice hairdressers (£2.64 per hour). Year 1 apprentices had a median pay level of £5.33 per hour, Year 2 £5.93 and Year 3 £6.76. What the survey also showed is that four out of five received on or above the minimum amount they should get based on their year of study and/or age. However clearly 20% received less, and 5% of the respondents to the survey said that they received no pay at all.<sup>30</sup>

In Estonia apprentices are entitled to the minimum legal wage, as do other workers, but the rate is very low (€320 per month).

Pay is an issue in Cyprus. Where apprentices are in sectors which are covered by collective agreements, they are paid by the employers for the days spent in the workplace according to the rate stipulated in the agreement. Cleaning ladies, security guards, caretakers, nursery assistants, shop assistants and office workers are not covered by collective agreements and so are paid a minimum wage. However there is considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that some apprentices are paid less than the agreed rates.

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<sup>30</sup> Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, *Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2011, 2011*

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# Trade Unions and the Governance of Apprenticeships

Trade unions can, and do, influence policy making and policy implementation in one specific area - the participation of young people in the labour market.

There are numerous potential ways of increasing the participation of young people in the labour market - measures to prevent early school leaving, to reintegrate early school leavers, to facilitate the transition from school to work, to foster employability of young people and to remove practical/logistical barriers and employer incentives.<sup>31</sup> Apprenticeships provide trade unions with an opportunity to facilitate the transition from school to work and foster employability of young people. Indeed, as an ILO publication has recently pointed out, 'trade unions play a key role in achieving this balance (between apprenticeship costs and benefits) by negotiating apprentice pay levels below those of fully-skilled workers while at the same time insisting on high quality training with substantial elements of transferable skills and knowledge'.<sup>32</sup> They also do this by means of their involvement in the design and delivery of apprenticeship systems.

Trade unions make an important contribution to the successful design and delivery of apprenticeship systems throughout Europe. This is not always recognised. Indeed the latest publication from the European Commission refers to social partners but at no time is there any specific mention of trade unions per se.<sup>33</sup> However trade unions are represented, along with employers' organisations, on VET-related commissions and councils in all the ten countries in this study.

## Bulgaria

In Bulgaria there are very few apprenticeship schemes and no national commissions relating to apprenticeships per se. However, trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations (four members each, two for KNSB and two for CL Podkrepa) on the National Council for the Promotion of Employment, which *inter alia* makes proposals to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy for the development of draft legislation, measures and programmes for the promotion of employment. Trade unions have equal representation (eight members each, with four from KNSB and four from CL Podkrepa) with employers' organisations on the Management Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, whose mission is to:

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<sup>31</sup> Eurofound, *Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people*, Dublin, 2012

<sup>32</sup> *Op cit*, p 21

<sup>33</sup> European Commission, *Work-based Learning in Europe – Practices and Policy Pointers*, 2013

- cooperate with the social partners in implementing coordinated policies for lifelong learning, continuing vocational training and introducing successful European practices;
- expand the access of the unemployed and the employed to vocational education and training according to the labour market needs;
- ensure public access to useful information concerning the continuing vocational training and lifelong learning in the country and in the EU;
- develop the List of professions for vocational education and training;
- develop State Educational Requirements (standards) for acquiring qualifications.

Trade unions are also members of its 17 Expert Commissions, 16 of which cover different economic sectors<sup>34</sup>, and one transversal commission for vocational training guidance (articles 41–49 of Vocational Education and Training Act, 1999). These Expert Commissions prepare reports for the Management Board on proposals for the licensing of VET centres; they participate in developing and updating the State Educational Requirements for acquiring vocational qualifications, as

well as the State Educational standards for the public education system and the assessment system covering vocational education and training; they participate in developing and updating the list of professions for vocational education and training; they determine the activities to be performed within the profession and the requirements in relation to the development of the respective competences – knowledge, skills and personality qualities – required for successful implementation; and they serve as a basis for the preparation of the teaching curricula and programmes. In this way sectoral trade unions are well placed to play a leading role in influencing the delivery of vocational education training.

Trade unions are generally not involved in the preparation of trainers' manuals, unless they are going to be used in their own training institutions. In addition, according to the Vocational Education and Training Act, trade unions are to be consulted by all training providers on assessment content and procedures for public examinations. The challenge for Bulgarian trade unions is to have the human resources to respond to these requests.

<sup>34</sup> Earth and yield sciences and mineral resources dressing; mechanical engineering, metal working and metallurgical engineering; electrical engineering and power engineering; information and communication technologies, electronics and automation; chemical products, technologies and environmental studies; motor vehicles, ships and aircrafts and transportation services; architecture and construction; food and beverages production; production of textile and textile goods, leather and wood; farming, forestry and fish husbandry and veterinary medicine; hotel and restaurant management, catering, travelling, tourism and leisure activities; business management and administration; arts; healthcare and sport; social services, personality services, property and personality protection.

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## Cyprus

Cyprus has very limited provision for apprenticeship training within the context of a broader vocational education and training system which is overseen by the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA). Trade unions and employers' organisations have equal representation (4 members each) on the 13-strong Board of Governors of the HRDA, whose mission is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of Cyprus's human resources, at all levels and in all sectors, to meet the economy's needs, within the overall socio-economic policies of the nation.

The HRDA has the power and responsibility: *inter alia*, to coordinate and ensure the supply of training nationwide; establish, operate or supervise institutions or training institutions; prepare and approve training programmes and ensure that take all appropriate measures are implemented; ensure and conduct examinations and issue the relevant certificates; set standards of professional qualifications for any category or categories of employees.

Trade unions have also equal representation with employers' organisations on the Apprenticeship Board which decides upon the specialisations that will be offered each school year, identifies and recommend levels of education and recommends to the Ministry measures relating to the operation of the apprenticeship system. They also have equal representation with employers' organisations on the five Apprenticeship Committees, which monitor the implementation of the system in each province and submit recommenda-

tions to the Apprenticeship Board on issues such as the employment of apprentices and apprenticeship contracts.

Given 'the chronic problems of the existing apprenticeship system', the Council of Ministers decided in 2007 to set up the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMS). It is now in its first year of operation and should be fully operational by 2015. However no formal decision has been taken yet as to the membership of the Apprenticeship Board. It is expected that the same composition will be retained.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has recently set up Post-secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training, and the trade unions have three members on their Management Boards.

## Denmark

Denmark has a broad-based and well-regarded system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for extensive apprenticeship training. At the national level responsibility resides with the Ministry for Children and Education, and the latest significant changes to the system are laid down in the Vocational Education and Training Act (*Erhvervsuddannelsesloven* - LBK no. 439 of 29.04.2013).

According to the Ministry for Children and Education, the aim is to provide young people with vocational qualifications, which are formally recognised and in demand by the labour market and to provide them with qualifications that open up possibilities for lifelong learning and for active citizenship. The social partners have considerable influence on, and thus, great responsibility for VET.

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The Ministry for Children and Education is advised by the National Council of Vocational Education and Training (*Rådet for de grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser*) on the regulation of the general framework of training, and the definition of guidelines for curriculum content and assessment. Article 34 of the Vocational Education and Training Act stipulates that trade unions have equal representation, along with employers' organisations, on the Board of the National Council of Vocational Education and Training, and together they form the majority (18 out of 24 members). The trade unions have 9 voting members, and at the time of writing there are two from the confederation *Landsorganisationen i Danmark* (LO-D), and one each from sectoral unions (*Dansk El-forbund*, *3F*, *Malerforbundet*, *Dansk Metal*, *FOA*, *HK* and the *Frisør- og Kosmetikerforbund*). One of the LO-D representatives is the Vice Chairperson.

According to article 37 of the Vocational Education and Training Act, 'employers' and workers' organisations shall set up a number of 'trade committees' (*faglige udvalg*) with an equal number of employer and employee representatives. These 'trade committees' - approximately 50 in number<sup>35</sup> - lay down the detailed content of the education and training programmes within the general

framework provided by the National Council, and more specifically the duration and structure of the training programmes, their objectives and assessment, as well as the distribution between work-based training and school-based training. In the light of developments in the labour market, they may propose the launching of new courses or the closure of existing courses. In addition, they are responsible for the licensing of training institutions.

At the local level training institutions have education and training committees which advise on the curricula for training programmes. They also act as a forum for liaison between local businesses and training institutions to ensure that the training responds to the needs of the local labour market. A majority of these committee members are appointed by the 'trade committees' with equal representation for trade unions and employers' organisations (article 40).

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<sup>35</sup> a full list is to be found on [http://www.ug.dk/job/artikleromjobogarbmm/omarbejdsmarkedet/organisationer/faglige\\_udvalg.aspx#fold2](http://www.ug.dk/job/artikleromjobogarbmm/omarbejdsmarkedet/organisationer/faglige_udvalg.aspx#fold2)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/102072013001> (retrieved 1.12.2013)

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## Estonia

Estonia has very limited apprenticeship training within the context of a broader vocational education and training system. Vocational Education and Training is regulated by the Vocational Education Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*, September 2013).<sup>36</sup> Until June 2013 apprenticeship training was regulated according to the Policies of Implementing Workplace Based Training (*Töökohapõhise õppe rakendamise kord*, 2007).<sup>37</sup> A VET System Development Plan was launched in 2009 and is now coming to its end. Many initiatives foreseen in the strategy required changes in legislation. The new Act foresees the linking of VET to the Estonian Qualifications Framework and focuses specifically on a new structure of VET study programmes, the learning outcomes approach in the design of occupational standards and VET programmes, qualification requirements for pedagogical staff, and improved quality assurance in VET. The new draft VET Institutions Act foresees VET qualifications going up to Level 5. There is no specific mention of apprenticeships, but clearly they will be affected by these new proposals.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the coordination and implementation of VET policy. The implementing arm of the Ministry is the National Examinations and Qualifications Centre - (*Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus (REKK)*), which was merged into the Innove Foundation in August 2012.

There is no tri-partite forum for the definition of VET policy in Estonia and by extension no forum for the design of apprenticeship schemes. However there is a tri-partite forum for the development of occupational qualifications systems. The Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Sihtasutus Kutsekoda*) was established in August 2001. Both trade union confederations, the Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation (TALO) and the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions (EAKL) are represented on the Supervisory Board. The main functions of *Sihtasutus Kutsekoda* are to organise and coordinate the activities of sector skills councils, to keep the register of occupational qualifications, to organise the development and updating of occupational qualification standards on the basis of decisions made by sector skills councils.<sup>38</sup> The role of sector skills councils is to analyse suggestions of different institutions and achieve a consensus upon developing occupational qualification standards and award occupational qualifications. A sectoral trade union is represented on each of sector skills councils.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/12810050> (retrieved 2.12.2013)

<sup>38</sup> 16 sector skills councils are recognised by the Estonian Government, as follows: Commercial Service and Other Business Activities; Construction, Real Estate and Geomatics; Service; Forestry; Health Care and Social Work; Light Industry; Engineering, Metal and Machine Industry; Food Industry and Agriculture; Transport and Logistics; Energy, Mining and Chemical Industry; Information Technology and Telecommunication; Engineers; Justice and Internal Security; Folk Art and Handicraft; Culture; Education.

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The government and social partners signed a trilateral Agreement on Joint Activities (*Ühise tegevuse kokkulepe kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks ja kvalifitseeritud tööjõu ettevalmistamiseks aastatel 2006–2009*) which declared that good will should be shown by all participants to develop VET according to the priority areas of the development plan.<sup>39</sup>

At the local level vocational training institutions are managed by Boards, which direct the activities of the school and take a position on the school's development, property, financial and management issues, according to article 27.1 of the Vocational Education Institutions Act, and trade unions are represented on the Board (article 27.2). The challenge for the trade unions is the availability of trade unionists to take on these responsibilities.

## Germany

Germany has a broad-based and well regarded system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for extensive apprenticeship training. Responsibilities are shared between the national (*Bund*) level and the regional (*Land*) level, as defined by the 2005 Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz - BBIG*).

At the national level overall responsibility for apprenticeship training resides with the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung - BMBF*). It funds and supervises the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung - BIBB*), whose tasks include conducting

research on vocational education and training, developing vocational education and training, serving in an advisory capacity and providing services. Its five major priorities at the moment are: the training market and the employment system; modernisation and high quality development of the vocational training system; lifelong learning, permeability and educational pathways; vocational training for specific target groups; and the internationalisation of vocational training. Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations (eight members each) on its Board, which is often described as Germany's VET Parliament. In 2013 there were two representatives of the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (DGB), and one from each of the following trade unions: IG Metall, IG BCE, ver.di, GEW, IG BAU and DBB.

Trade unions are central to decisions taken on the development and/or updating of training regulations for each of the 344 occupational profiles.<sup>40</sup> At sectoral level trade unions and employers' organisations provide the experts who, in conjunction with the BIBB, decide on the vocational skills, knowledge and qualifications (vocational competence) needed to carry out each occupation, the overall training curriculum and the assessment requirements. For example, the trade union ver.di is jointly responsible for some 200 occupations. The emphasis is very much on consensus, and normally the Federal Government does not allow a training regulation to go forward without the approval of the social partners. These training regulations are then ratified by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology, in agreement with the Federal Ministry for Education and Research.

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<sup>39</sup> Cedefop, *VET in Europe - Country report: Estonia 2012*, Thessaloniki, 2012, p 45

<sup>40</sup> <http://www2.bibb.de/tools/aab/aaberufeliste.php>

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At the regional level each Land has a regional committee for vocational training (*Landsausschuss für Berufsbildung*), which advises the regional government on vocational training matters, with particular attention to the coordination between work-based training and school-based training. Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on these committees, with six members each, out of a total of 18.

At the local level there are also so-called 'Competent Bodies' (*Zuständige Stellen*), primarily Chambers of Commerce and Industry or Chambers of Crafts, which are responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring apprenticeship training (supervising training institutions, assessing trainers, and organising examinations) and providing advisory services for apprenticeship training. Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on the Vocational Training Committees (*Berufsbildungsausschuss*) of the 'Competent Bodies'.

In addition, at the company level trade unions have an opportunity to become involved in apprenticeship training via the works councils, which are responsible for the promotion of vocational training, the establishment of training facilities and programmes and the implementation of vocational training within the workplace (articles 96-98 of the *Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*).

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## Ireland

Ireland's well regarded apprenticeship system is under severe strain, in the wake of the economic crisis. At national level responsibility for Vocational Education and Training lies with the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and responsibility for the National Apprenticeship Programme resides with *Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS)*, which is now known in English as the National Training Authority.

The Industrial Training Act (1967) and the Labour Services Act (1987) gave FÁS the functions of, *inter alia*: declaring an activity of industry to be a designated industrial activity; making rules regarding the employment of apprentices in such a designated industrial activity; controlling and consenting to the employment of apprentices within any such designated industrial activity; and keeping a register of those employed as apprentices. In addition the Industrial Services Training Act (1967) gave FÁS the responsibility for making arrangements for the provision of courses of instruction in the nature of technical education by a vocational education committee of a type which FÁS and the vocational education committee agree to be suitable for such apprentices.

Ireland has embarked on a major redefinition of its training strategy which has led to a restructuring of its support agencies. In 2011 the DES announced the establishment of a new Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS (*Seirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna*), which is in the process of taking over FÁS' responsibilities.

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Up until now FÁS has had a National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (NAAC) with eleven members, four of whom represent the social partners (two for the trade unions and two for the employers' organisations). It has regularly set up Project Steering Groups, with trade union representation, for each sector to review the apprentice programme to ensure it is relevant to the appropriate standard of skills, knowledge and competence required for a specific craft occupation. This is done by reviewing the occupational profile and the modular plan against the predefined standards, the modular sequence, the allocation of modular hours, the programme content and the learning outcomes of all training and learning phases. This in turn has led to the production of a range of support materials for apprentices, incorporating all aspects of the training process.<sup>41</sup>

There has also been a NAAC subcommittee on accreditation and the recognition of prior learning, with one trade union member. There is still a NAAC Subcommittee for appeals procedures and for redundant apprentices, both of which have trade union representation. There is also a separate Construction Industry Advisory Committee, with two members representing the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Separately social partners are members of the Board of the National Council for Curriculum Assessment, and the trade unions have nine members.

## Italy

Italy has a complex system of vocational education and training which includes provision for apprenticeship training. It is in a state of transition. The main framework and the responsibilities of the different stakeholders were established recently in the 2011 'Consolidated Act on Apprenticeships' (*Testo Unico sull'Apprendistato - Legislative Decree n. 167/2011*) that entered into force on 25 April 2012.

Governance is complex, and a variety of different actors work at different levels. According to article 117 of the Italian Constitution, the State has exclusive legislative powers as regards education, whilst the Regions have exclusive powers as regards vocational training. However the 'Consolidated Act on Apprenticeships' hands over governance of apprenticeships to the social partners on the basis of agreements signed by representative employers' organisations and trade unions. So in order to improve coordination the Act proposes to set up a special technical body '*organismo tecnico*' whose task is to harmonise the occupational qualifications obtained according to the different types of training and correlate educational standards (a responsibility of the regions) and occupational standards (a responsibility of the social partners) which will be established in a National Classification of Occupations (article 6). The three most representative trade union confederations, along with employers' organisations, are members of the special technical body.

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<sup>41</sup> For an example of this work, see FÁS *Electrical Curriculum*, 2006

Inter-sectoral agreements are generally limited to transposing the provisions of the law, whilst at the same time giving them a supplementary authority and credibility vis-à-vis their member organisations. The sectoral agreements stipulate specific rights and responsibilities. They define the length of the apprenticeships. They explain the arrangements for the provision of training for the acquisition of technical and occupational skills and expertise in relation to the occupational profiles. In the credit and finance industry agreement signed in January 2012 there is, for example, an annex devoted to the type of competences required for the different occupations in the sector, followed by a list of competences that are required for an in-company mentor. In the food industry agreement signed in April 2012, there is a description of the different training requirements for each occupation, in terms of basic knowledge, transversal skills, specific skills for the occupation and competences.

Trade unions have parity with employers' organisations on the Management Boards of the 21 sectoral Interprofessional Joint Funds<sup>42</sup> which finance continuing vocational training in companies. The social partners share the posts of President and Vice-President.

## Netherlands

The Netherlands has a broad-based and well regarded system of vocational education and training, including provision for apprenticeship training which may be interchangeable with initial school-based training. The basis for the modern VET system is to be found in the 1995 Education and Vocational Training Act.<sup>43</sup>

At the national level overall responsibility for apprenticeship training strategy resides with the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science. The implementation of apprenticeship strategy is in transition. In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science produced an Action Plan 'Focus on Craftsmanship', which aimed to improve coherence between training providers and the labour market. A central advisory role was handed to a new foundation, Cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market (*Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven - SBB*), which began its work in January 2012. The development of qualifications has been delegated to the 17 sectoral Knowledge Centres<sup>44</sup>, which inter alia are also responsible for licensing workplaces that want to participate in the apprenticeship schemes. It was also decided that the public

<sup>42</sup> For a list of Interprofessional Joint Funds, see <http://fondinterprofessionali.isfol.it/?id=195>

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.st-ab.nl/wetten/D467\\_Wet\\_educatie\\_en\\_beroepsonderwijs\\_WEB.htm](http://www.st-ab.nl/wetten/D467_Wet_educatie_en_beroepsonderwijs_WEB.htm) (retrieved 4.7.2013)

<sup>44</sup> At the moment there are still 17 Knowledge Centres, as follows:

Aequor (agriculture and horticulture), Calibris (health care, social care and sports), ECABO (economic / administrative, ICT and security), Fundeon (construction industry and infrastructure), Kenniscentrum GOC (graphic and media), Innovam Groep (automotive), Kenniscentrum Handel (retail, wholesale and international trade), Kenteq (metal, electrical and mechanical technology), Kenwerk (hospitality, bakery, tourism, recreation and facility), KOC Nederland (hair care, foot care and beauty care), Kenniscentrum PMLF (process technology, environmental technology, laboratory technology and photonics), Savantis (painting and maintenance, plastering and finishing, and presentation and communication), Kenniscentrum SH&M (furniture and joinery industry, wood trade, wood processing industry, and related industries), SVGB kennis- en opleidingscentrum (health technology and creative craftsmanship), SVO (fresh food retail and industry), VOC (bodywork industry) VTL (transport and logistics).

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funds for the Knowledge Centres would be drastically reduced from 120 to 50 million euros, and the latter would be restructured.

Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on the Board of the new SBB, with three members each – two from the *Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV)* and one from the *Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (CNV)*, and in addition a member of the teachers' trade union, *Algemene Onderwijsbond*. The Board meets four times a year and focuses on the main outlines of policy and governance. One of the four members of its Executive Board is a trade union representative. The SBB has also set up three thematic Advisory Committees (qualifications and examinations, work placement and effectiveness) with parity for the social partners on the one hand and training institutions on the other – the trade unions and employers' organisations have equal representation.

The process works, as follows. Trade unions and employers' organisations agree on occupational profiles, then pass on the task of developing and/or updating qualifications to the Knowledge Centres, where trade unions and employers are represented, also on an equal basis with the vocational training institutions. The Knowledge Centres are advised by Joint Commissions, which are made up of equal numbers of representatives from employers' organisations and trade unions on the one hand and vocational training institutions on the other. In addition the Knowledge Centres employ a significant number of pedagogical advisers,<sup>45</sup> some

of whom are proposed by trade unions, to monitor work-based training, to produce training materials and to train in-company mentors. Fundeon, for example, the Knowledge Centre for the construction industry and infrastructure, produces a series of manuals,<sup>46</sup> provides a 4-day initial training courses for new in-company mentors and a 1-day refresher course for them every two years.

## Spain

Spain is one of the three EU Member States that has, at least until recently, only offered school-based initial vocational education and training (IVET). The 2002 Statutory Law on Qualifications and Training provides the basis for a common framework for vocational education and training and establishes the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Training. The Education Statutory Law (2006) provides the basis for school-based vocational training which includes a compulsory workplace-based module. Responsibility for implementation lies with the Autonomous Communities and the Education Inspectorate.<sup>47</sup>

The General Council for Vocational Training (*Consejo General de la Formación Profesional*) is a consultative body which has statutory responsibility for preparing the National Programme of Vocational Training and for determining the VET curricula, in conjunction with the Autonomous Communities and the social partners. Trade unions, along with the employers' organisations, are formally consulted on different aspects of

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<sup>45</sup> 55, in the case of Fundeon (construction industry and infrastructure)

<sup>46</sup> For example, *Handboek Vakman GWW*

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice\\_legislacion.html](http://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_legislacion.html)  
[http://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-13846](http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2012-13846) retrieved 4.7.2013

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the implementation of the VET system. The General Council for Vocational Training has 77 members, 28 of which represent trade unions (four from the confederations, 20 from the teaching unions and four from the office and staff unions). It works in conjunction with the National Institute of Qualifications (*Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones*) which is responsible for drawing up the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications; observing qualifications and their evolution; determining qualifications; accrediting qualifications; developing the integration of professional qualifications; monitoring and evaluating the National Vocational Training Programme. It has 107 members, only four of which represent trade unions.

There are 78 joint sectoral committees that, *inter alia*, establish the general priorities of sectoral vocational education and training and make proposals to the National Institute of Qualifications. At the sectoral level trade unions are involved in discussions on vocational education and training within the 78 joint sectoral committees.

A new Royal Decree, adopted in November 2012, has the potential to revolutionise the development of apprenticeships in Spain. Heavily inspired by the German model, it provides the basis for dual vocational training, which will be developed in five different ways (article 3):

- training exclusively carried out in a training institution, which consists of aggregating and alternating training acquired in a training institutions and work carried out in a company;

- training involving the company, which consists of companies providing the training institutions with space, facilities or experts to deliver all or a part of the workplace modules or training modules;
- training carried out in an authorised or an accredited company and a training institution, which consists of providing certain workplace modules that are complementary to those taught in the training institutions;
- training shared between training institutions and the company, which consists of cooperating in specific proportions in the teaching and learning processes in the company and in the training institutions. The company must have authorisation from the Education Authority and/or accreditation from the relevant labour authorities to provide this type of training and will be attached to the institution to share the training;
- exclusive training in the company, which consists of training exclusively provided by the company.

The new dual vocational training system is in an experimental phase, with funding for 4,000 apprentices and the involvement of 120 training institutions and the participation of 550 enterprises. It remains to be seen what changes in terms of governance will flow from the introduction of the new Royal Decree.

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## United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a devolved system of governance for education and training. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) covers England and Wales, for example, and provides for a statutory framework for apprenticeships and creates a right to an apprenticeship for suitably qualified 16-18 year olds. Separate arrangements exist for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

There is no tri-partite forum for the definition of VET policy in the United Kingdom. However the UK Commission for Employment and Skills provides advice on skills and employment policy to the UK government. Of the 25 Commissioners on the UK Commission for and Skills, four are General Secretaries of trade unions; the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), UNISON and Unite.

In England, for example, the Department of Business Innovations and Skills sets out its policy priorities annually for the skills sector in England in a Skills Funding Statement which provides details about the overall level of funding for skills development, and it is the task of the Skills Funding Agency, the successor to the Learning and Skills Council, to implement the Department's policy. The Welsh equivalent is the Assembly Government for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. The Scottish Equivalent is the Scottish Funding Council.

In England the Skills Funding Agency houses the National Apprenticeship Service, whose priorities for 2012-13 are as follows: 'increasing the number of new employers employing apprentices; increasing the number of young people starting an apprenticeship; high quality apprenticeships; more advanced and higher level apprentices; broadening access to the apprenticeship programme. The Skills Funding Agency provides a forum for the development of skills, and the TUC is represented on its Advisory Board. Its Scottish equivalent, the Scottish Funding Council, does not have trade union representation on its Board, but the General Secretary of the STUC is a member of its Skills Committee. The TUC is also represented on the Apprentices Stakeholders Board which advises the National Apprenticeship Service.

National Occupational Standards are set by 29 Sector Skills Councils (and other standard setting organisations).<sup>48</sup> They define apprenticeship frameworks, and these frameworks contain a number of separately certified elements, as follows:

- a competencies qualification which is the required to demonstrate competence in performing the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates ;
- a technical knowledge qualification which is required to demonstrate achievement of the technical skills, knowledge and understanding of theoretical concepts and knowledge and understanding of the industry and its market relevant to the skill, trade or occupation to which the framework relates;

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<sup>48</sup> For a list of Sector Skills Councils, see <http://www.sscalliance.org/SectorSkillsCouncils/DirectoryofSSCs/DirectorySSCs.aspx> (retrieved 10.9.2013)

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- a module on employee rights and responsibilities;
  - a module on personal learning and thinking skills;
  - functional Skills (e.g. Maths and English) qualifications or a GCSE with enhanced content (e.g. Maths and English).

Trade unions are associated with the work of some of the employer-led Sector Skills Councils: for example, Unite has a member on the Board of the Energy and Utility Skills Group, UNISON has a member on Skills for Health, GMB has a member on the Board of Skills for Security and Prospect has a member on the Co-ordinating Board of e-skills UK.

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## Trade Unions and the Quality of Apprenticeships at the national and European levels

At the national level some apprenticeship systems are under review or in a state of transition, and trade unions have acted to defend or improve the quality of the various systems.

Even in Germany, which is recognised internationally as having a high quality apprenticeship system, there are perceived shortcomings. In its latest training report the DGB Youth Department calls for the following:

- a guaranteed apprenticeship place in a company for all young people;
- compliance with existing statutory rules and regulations;
- better statutory rules, as regards working time, time off for examination preparation and free training materials;

- the elimination of apprenticeship schemes of short duration;
- automatic transfer of successful apprentices to fulltime permanent jobs;
- improvements in the quality of training institutions.<sup>49</sup>

The DGB Vocational Training Department noted other concerns. There is no national sustainable system of quality assurance, and the monitoring of apprentices' performance is weak. As a result the drop-out rate in certain sectors, for example, in the hotel, restaurant and catering sector, is high, and the failure rate, for example in the craft sector, is also high.

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<sup>49</sup> DGB Jugend, *Ausbildungsreport 2012*, 2012, pp 72-73

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In Denmark there are two major concerns: firstly the difficulty in finding workplaces for apprentices; and secondly, the high dropout rate in the first year, which is indicative of a mismatch between young people's expectations and what the apprenticeship system has to offer.

As has been explained above, the apprenticeship system in the Netherlands is in transition, and there are real concerns in the FNV as regards the quality of apprenticeships, following the decision to reduce the funds (from 120 million to 50 million euros) available to the Knowledge Centres that are responsible for developing and/or updating qualifications, producing training materials and training in-company mentors. Also the Knowledge Centres will be restructured. Consequently the trade unions have lobbied the government to continue to fund the services of the Knowledge Centres' pedagogical advisers. .

In Ireland too, the apprenticeship system is in transition. The Irish Government announced the preparations of an Action Plan for Jobs in May 2012, and this will call for a review of apprenticeship training. More recently FÁS produced an apprenticeship review.<sup>50</sup> The major trade union concern is that the system should be retained and not diluted in quality. There should be no move towards a 2+2 system (i.e. two full years school-based and two full years work-based) which would lead to a dislocation between work-based and school-based training. There should be no further reduction in the ratio of mentors to apprentices. Apprentices' wages should continue to be paid by the employers when they are engaged in school-based training.

In Estonia, the introduction of the new Vocational Institutions Act is considered by the trade unions to be a positive development, since this should improve quality assurance, according to EAKL. In addition the learning outcomes approach, which is central to the Act and the Estonian Qualifications Framework, should improve access to training by facilitating the recognition of prior learning.

Spain is in the process of introducing some elements of dual training. However for the UGT it is necessary to agree minimum standards for dual vocational training schemes, as follows:

- adaptation of the curriculum to be offered with this new method, and the definition of the roles to be played by training institutions and companies;
- reconfiguration of work-based training so that it accounts for 60 to 80% of the total programme;
- establishment of minimum conditions that companies must respect (classrooms, in-company mentors, trainers that are responsible for the theoretical and practical training, coordinators of the training content, delivery schedule);
- establishment of minimum working conditions and the role of trade unions in the monitoring of contracts and conflict resolution;
- establishment of licensing requirements, procedures for their selection, and of conditions for workplace mentors;
- choice of assessment procedures, involving the training institutions and the company

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<sup>50</sup> Foras Áiseanna Saothair, *Apprenticeship review – Background Issues Paper*, 2013

- participation of sectoral organisations (employers and trade unions) in the quality assurance mechanisms of this type of vocational training.<sup>51</sup>

In Bulgaria the KNSB has already prepared a position on apprenticeships in readiness for amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act, within a broader Memorandum on Social-economic and Socio-political Development (2013-2017). Any dual training system should be introduced on the basis of a consensus amongst stakeholders; companies should adhere to minimum standards as regards conditions for apprentices and in-company mentors; and all training providers should have access to the existing high-technology regional centres so that apprentices can develop their practical skills.<sup>52</sup>

In Italy, where the system is being radically overhauled, it is necessary, according to UIL, to bring together the different stakeholders to ensure that a coherent national system can emerge from the latest political changes. There is need for a clear and more detailed definition of competences. Work-based training needs more to be more rigorously monitored and evaluated, and in-company mentors should be trained. Finally, stability will be important, so that potential apprentices, their families and employers, can start to have confidence in the system.

In the United Kingdom a review of apprenticeships was launched in 2012.<sup>53</sup> In its submission the TUC made a number of proposals:

- the amount of time given over to training should be increased, and there should be a minimum of one day off-the-job training per week;
- the national minimum wage for apprentices should be policed more rigorously;
- all apprenticeship schemes should have a minimum duration of 12 months;
- a clear minimum standard should be applicable for all sectors
- trade unions should be involved in the design of apprenticeship schemes alongside the Sector Skills Councils;
- action should be taken to widen access to apprenticeships, especially as regards gender, ethnicity and disability.<sup>54</sup>

Trade unions had a number of proposals for improving the quality of apprenticeships Europe-wide.

A first group of trade unions considered that the EU could usefully support the exchange of information and experience amongst countries (FNV, ICTU, KNSB, LO).

KNSB is of the opinion that the EU should support programmes to enable practitioners to exchange information and experience as regards the different apprenticeship

<sup>51</sup> Union General de Trabajadores, *UGT ante la Formación Profesional Dual*, 2012

<sup>52</sup> KNSB, *Memorandum on Social- political and Socio-economic Development of Bulgaria (2013-2017)*, (кноб, меморандум за обществено-политическото и социално-икономическото развитие на България 2013 – 2017г.)

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships> (retrieved 10.9.2013)

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schemes. Irish trade unions consider that the EU could provide opportunities for a better understanding of good practice in other Member States, notably the *Meister* in Germany, and ways in which this could possibly be introduced into other systems. The Italian trade unions consider that the EU should support the exchange of information and experience, particularly in terms of cases of good practice.

LO Denmark wants to prioritise countries that already have the dual system. Topics for discussion would be: how to attract young people to apprenticeships; how to organise apprenticeships in multinational companies that do not have a tradition of offering apprenticeships and are in addition more distant from the socio-economic realities of local communities; how to organise apprenticeships in new emerging occupations; how to respond to the employment aspirations of young people who have low-level or no academic qualifications and who are on the fringes of the labour market and enable their transition from school to the world of work.

A second grouping highlighted the importance of minimum European standards for apprenticeships.

The DGB is of the opinion that the EU could propose minimum standards for apprenticeships in all Member States. As part of this approach the EU could provide a competence framework for trainers which would include continuing training, as in Switzerland. Minimum principles should highlight the importance in-company guidance and mentoring, a point made also by FNV Bouw.

EAKL, for example, is of the opinion that the EU should put forward proposals to ensure minimum standards, both for training conditions and for working conditions, and also for the financing of apprenticeships.

For the KNSB, this means defining the minimum outcomes of the training process, clarifying the roles of the different actors and improving the training skills of in-company mentors.

A third grouping would like to see apprenticeship schemes opened up to unemployed adults – KNSB for example.

A fourth grouping is of the opinion that any EU initiatives should emphasise the importance of the role of social partners in the design and delivery of apprenticeship training. This was underlined by the Italian trade unions and the FNV.

A fifth grouping wants to see the EU ensure that the European Social Fund earmarks funding for apprenticeship training, the Italians for example. The Irish trade unions were particularly interested in ESF funding for training redundant apprentices.

A sixth grouping insisted upon the need to address the issue of economic growth which is essential to provide the jobs that require trained apprentices (FNV).

All these proposals have formed the underpinning for the European Trade Union Confederation Recommendations for Apprenticeships, which is to be found in Appendix 1.

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# Appendix 1 - ETUC Quality Framework for Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning

Youth unemployment in the European Union has reached totally unacceptable levels. **The European Trade Union Confederation refuses to countenance the notion of a 'lost, sacrificed or expendable generation'**, and an ambitious and effective European strategy is urgently needed to address this issue.

Apprenticeship schemes provide one essential part of the policy mix. Apprenticeship schemes constitute a tried and tested way of ensuring the successful transition of young people from formal schooling to the world of work, and the European Trade Union Confederation strongly supports the development of a wide-ranging European apprenticeship strategy, built on the following minimum quality standards:

**1.** Apprenticeship schemes should be clearly defined on the basis of the proposal made by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, a specialised agency set up by the European Union, – *'systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training institutions. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.'*

**2.** Apprenticeship schemes should be built on stable foundations – on the basis of national law, regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements.

**3.** Apprenticeship schemes should cater for the real employment and skills needs of employers within the framework of sectoral and/or national priorities.

**4.** Apprenticeship schemes should support the personal development and career opportunities of apprentices.

**5.** Apprenticeship schemes should require employers to enter into formal employment contracts with apprentices describing the rights and obligations of both parties.

**6.** Apprenticeship schemes should require training institutions to enter into training contracts with apprentices describing the rights and obligations of both parties.

**7.** Apprenticeship schemes should ensure that apprentices are paid by the employer, according to collective agreements, or a national and/or sectoral minimum legal wage, for the period of training.

**8.** Apprenticeship schemes should be governed at all levels by a partnership between the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), together with public authorities and training institutions. The social partners should be responsible for accrediting the training institutions.

**9.** Apprenticeship schemes should guarantee high quality and safe working environments, and the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) should be given responsibility for monitoring the suitability of workplaces and for accrediting interested companies.

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10. Apprenticeship schemes should provide appropriate guidance and counselling for apprentices, both before and during the training process.

11. Apprenticeship schemes should have robust quality assurance procedures.

12. Apprenticeship schemes should cover a wide range of different occupations and thus provide employment opportunities for all, men and women alike.

13. Apprenticeship schemes should be built on a solid base of knowledge, skills and competence acquired in the primary and secondary school system.

14. Apprenticeship schemes should include a strong training component, with a clear majority of learning provided in the workplace and a clear commitment to forward-looking developments within the labour market and society.

15. Apprenticeship schemes should provide good quality training in the workplace, with in-company mentors trained for this purpose, and also within training institutions employing trainers that have up-to-date and appropriate skills. Both mentors and trainers should enjoy good working conditions so that they are able to do their job properly.

16. Apprenticeship schemes should be properly funded, with equitable cost-sharing between employers and public authorities at regional and/or national and European levels.

17. Apprenticeship schemes should be competence-based and have a duration which enables apprentices to attain the appropriate standards to work competently and safely.

18. Apprenticeship schemes should be certified by competent tri-partite bodies to ensure that the knowledge, skills and competence acquired are recognised within the labour market and throughout the education and training system.

19. Apprenticeship schemes should offer qualifications which are clearly placed within National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), thus ensuring progression pathways to other NQF levels and programmes.

20. Apprenticeship schemes should ensure the recognition of knowledge, skills and competence acquired by means of non-formal and informal learning.

21. Apprenticeship schemes should include provision for the mobility of apprentices at national and European levels.

Trade unions throughout Europe should continue to demonstrate their active and committed support for high quality apprenticeship schemes.

Trade unions throughout Europe should improve their engagement with apprentices in the workplace so as to represent their interests more effectively.

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## Appendix 2 – Country Reports

### Summary – Bulgaria

Bulgaria had a tradition of offering apprenticeships during the Communist period, but this practice was more or less abandoned. The Bulgarian government is in discussions with the Swiss government in order to improve the Bulgarian VET system and is in the process of preparing amendments to the 1999 Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA) (*закон за професионалното образование и обучение*).in order to introduce elements of dual vocational training - <http://www.investbulgaria.com/VocationalEducation-andTrainingAct.php>

Apprenticeships have survived in the craft sector however, and the Craft Act (2001) regulates the conditions and rules for apprenticeships, which included training with a master craftsman. However cuts in government funding have ensured that this type of apprenticeship training is fast disappearing.

In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 1,300 apprentices in 2009 in Bulgaria. The vast majority of young people are engaged in school-based Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET).

Within the context of the 2003 Employment Promotion Act, Bulgaria provides a form of training, which is described as an 'apprenticeship' but which may be more recognisable as an active labour market initiative, and this is generally for unskilled workers. Government funding exists for unemployed workers, of

all ages, to undertake work placements for a six month period.

Trade unions have equal representation (eight members each, with four from KNSB and four from CL Podkrepa) with employers' organisations on the Management Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, whose functions is, inter alia, to cooperate with the social partners in implementing coordinated policies for lifelong learning. (article 44 of VETA) Trade unions are also members of its 17 Expert Commissions, 16 of which cover different economic sectors, and one transversal commission for vocational training guidance (articles 49 of VETA). The sectoral trade unions are well placed to play a leading role in influencing the delivery of vocational education and training.

There is a minimum wage for work placement 'students' of 310 Lev per month, the same as other low-qualified workers. The key issue is the low level of the minimum legal wage, and trade unions are campaigning to increase this figure in the short term to 340 Lev for all workers.

In terms of European priorities KNSB would be in favour of establishing EU-wide quality standards, setting up programmes to exchange information and experience and opening up apprenticeship schemes to unemployed adults.

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## Summary – Cyprus

Cyprus has very limited provision for apprenticeship training within the context of a broader vocational education and training system. The initial system was established on the basis of the Apprenticeship Act (1966).

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2011, 'the scheme is an initial vocational education and training programme, which addresses drop-outs from the formal education system, between the ages of 14 and 17'. In October 2007 the Government revealed 'the chronic problems of the existing apprenticeship system', exemplified by the low social recognition and prestige of the apprenticeship; the non-recognition of the apprenticeship certificate as a qualification of the State and the labour market; and the problems of communication and coordination between the two ministries involved'. And so it decided to establish the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) which is being developed now and should be fully operational by 2015.

In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 300 apprentices in 2009 in Cyprus, with three times as many engaged in IVET courses. 178 young people were enrolled as apprentices in 2011/2012 and 56 in 2012/2013 – the final year of the old scheme, and at the same time 90 young people enrolled in the first year of the New Modern Apprenticeship system (2012/2013).

Apprenticeships take two years to complete. There is a fixed ratio between work-based training and school-based training, 60:40.

Trade unions and employers' organisations have equal representation (four members each) on the 13-strong Board of Governors of the Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA), which is vested with the responsibility of formulating policies and delivery systems to promote training and human resources development. Trade unions have equal representation with employers on the Apprenticeship Board, which decides upon the specialisations that will be offered in each school year. They have equal representation with employers on the 5 Apprenticeship Committees, which monitor the implementation of the system in each province and submit recommendations to the Apprenticeship Board on issues such as the employment of apprentices and apprenticeship contracts.

Apprentices are not considered as workers and on this basis may not join a trade union. Where apprentices are in sectors which are covered by collective agreements, they are paid by the employers for the days spent in the workplace. If this is not the case (for example, cleaning ladies, security guards, caretakers, nursery assistants, shop assistants and office workers), they receive the minimum wage. However there is considerable anecdotal evidence that some apprentices are paid less than the agreed rates.

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## Summary – Denmark

Denmark has a broad-based and well regarded system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for extensive apprenticeship training.

The basis for apprenticeship training in Denmark is to be found in Vocational Education and Training Act.

There is no specific legal definition of an apprenticeship as such, but an explanation of what apprenticeship training should provide (article 1 of the Act).

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 95,000 apprentices in 2009 in Denmark. However according to the latest figures from the Ministry for Children and Education, the figure was 88,172 for 2009, and 91,392 in 2010 but 90,994 in 2011.

Apprenticeships generally take 3 to 3.5 years to complete. Generally speaking, the ratio between work-based learning and school-based training is 66:33.

The Ministry for Children and Education is advised by the National Council of Vocational Education and Training (*Rådet for de grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser*) on the regulation of the general framework of training, and the definition of guidelines for curriculum content and assessment. Trade unions have equal representation, along with employers' organisations, on its Board, and together they form the majority. They have equal representation with employers' organisations on the 'trade committees' (*faglige udvalg*) which lay

down the detailed content of the education and training programmes within the general framework provided by the National Council, and more specifically the duration and structure of the training programmes, their objectives and assessment, as well as the distribution between work-based training and school-based training. At the local level training institutions have education and training committees which advise on the curricula for training programmes, and a majority of these committee members are appointed by the 'trade committees' with equal representation for trade unions and employers' organisations.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. There is no overall apprentice's wage, as they vary according to the different collective agreements. So, for example, as of 1 March 2013 a 1<sup>st</sup> year apprentice bricklayer would be paid 65,60 krone an hour, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year 79.70 krone, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year 89.25 krone and a 4<sup>th</sup> year 105.25 krone.

In terms of European priorities LO-D would be in favour of providing support for the supply of apprenticeship places.

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## Summary – Estonia

Apprenticeships are a relatively new phenomenon in Estonia. The concept was launched as part of a Phare project in 2002, with a follow up project financed by the ESF (2005–2008). Further development occurred in 2007 when the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research issued a Regulation on Implementing Workplace-based Study which stipulated a number of basic conditions for apprenticeships. A VET System Development Plan was launched in 2009 and is now coming to its end. Many initiatives foreseen in the strategy required changes in legislation, and so a new Vocational Educational Institutions Act was introduced in September 2013. This Act foresees the linking of VET to the Estonian Qualifications Framework and focuses specifically on a new structure of VET study programmes, the learning outcomes approach in the design of occupational standards and VET programmes, qualification requirements for pedagogical staff, and improved quality assurance in VET. The new VET Institutions Act foresees VET qualifications going up to Level 5. There is no specific mention of apprenticeships, but clearly they will be affected by these new proposals.

In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 600 apprentices. This latter figure dipped to 564 in 2010/11 and 566 in 2011/2012.

Apprenticeships vary in duration. Some take six months to complete, others four years, but this is exceptional, as most apprenticeships take 3 to 3.5 years. There is a fixed ratio between work-based training and school-based training: 66:33 respectively.

The Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Sihtasutus Kutsekoda*) was established in August 2001. Its main functions are: to organise and coordinate the activities of sector skills councils, to keep the register of occupational qualifications, to organise the development and updating of occupational qualification standards on the basis of decisions made by sector skills councils. The Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation (TALO) and the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions (EAKL) are both represented on its Supervisory Board. The role of sector skills councils is to analyse suggestions of different institutions and achieve a consensus upon developing occupational qualification standards and award occupational qualifications. Sectoral trade unions are represented on some of the sector skills councils and so have the possibility to participate in the definition of the core curriculum.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices receive the minimum legal wage during the work-based training and a study allowance for the school-based training.

In terms of European priorities EAKL would be in favour of proposals to ensure minimum standards, both for training and for working conditions, and also for the financing of apprenticeships.

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## Summary – Germany

Germany has a broad-based and well regarded system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for apprenticeship training.

The basis for apprenticeship training is to be found in Vocational Training Act (2005) (*Berufsbildungsgesetz - BBiG*), which, *inter alia*, covers the content and structure of training, the responsibilities of all stakeholders, remuneration, assessment, conditions for training institutions and trainers. <http://www.bmbf.de/de/1600.php>

According to article 1.3 of the Vocational Training Act, an apprenticeship should provide the professional skills, knowledge and competence in a structured training programme which are required to exercise a qualified professional activity in an ever changing world of work.

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission has estimated that there were 1,659,259 apprentices in 2009 in Germany. However, according to the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB*), the number of apprentices stood at 1,571,457 in 2009. It fell to 1,508,328 in 2010 and again to 1,460,658 in 2011.

Apprenticeships normally take three years to complete. However in certain cases and/or sectors this training can last two years or three and a half years. There is a fixed ratio for work-based training and school-based training, generally 75:25.

At the national level trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations (eight members each) on the Board of the *BIBB*, which is often described as Germany's VET Parliament. Trade unions are central to decisions taken on the development and/or updating of training regulations for each of the 344 occupational profiles. Trade unions have equal representation with employers' organisations on regional committees for vocational training, which advises the regional government on vocational training matters, and on Vocational Training Committees of the 'Competent Bodies', which are responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring apprenticeship training (supervising training institutions, assessing trainers, and organising examinations) and providing advisory services for apprenticeship training.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. In Germany apprentices' pay is covered by sectoral or regional agreements. The rates vary accordingly, and for example in 2012, according to figures from the *BIBB* for West Germany, the highest was an average of €986 per month for an apprentice bricklayer and the lowest €454 for an apprentice hairdresser.

In terms of European priorities the DGB would propose the introduction of minimum standards for apprenticeships, including competence frameworks for trainers which would include continuing training.

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## Summary – Ireland

Ireland's well regarded apprenticeship system is under severe strain, following the consequences of the economic crisis, and is in transition. Responsibility for the National Apprenticeship Programme is being transferred in 2013 from the Training and Employment Authority (*Foras Áiseanna Saothair – FÁS*) to a new Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS (*Seirbhísi Oideachais Leanúnaigh Agus Scileanna*).

The Apprentices Act (1959), Industrial Training Act (1967) and the Labour Services Act (1987/2009) provide the basis for the Irish apprenticeship system.

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1959/en/act/pub/0039/print.html>

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1967/en/act/pub/0005/index.html> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1987/en/act/pub/0015/index.html>

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 26,200 apprentices in 2009 in Ireland. However according to the latest figures from FÁS, there were 20,369 in 2009 (on the basis of accumulated registrations over the previous 4-year period), 13,267 in 2010, 7,811 in 2011 and 5,480 in 2012 – a calamitous decline. Moreover FÁS has had to set up programmes to train apprentices that had been made redundant.

Apprenticeships generally take four years to complete. There is a fixed ratio between work-based training and school-based training – 80:20.

Up until now FÁS has had a National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee with eleven members, four of whom represent the social partners (two for the trade unions and two for the employers' organisations). It has regularly set up Project Steering Groups, with trade union representation, for each sector to review the apprentice programme to ensure it is relevant to the appropriate standard of skills, knowledge and competence required for a specific craft occupation. There has also been a NAAC subcommittee on accreditation and the recognition of prior learning, with trade union representation. There is also a separate Construction Industry Advisory Committee, with two members representing the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices' pay is regulated by national collective agreements. In the construction industry agreement, for example, which was signed in 2011, 1<sup>st</sup> year apprentices are paid 33% of the national rate for craftsmen; 2<sup>nd</sup> years 50%; 3<sup>rd</sup> years 75%; and 4<sup>th</sup> years 90%.

In terms of European priorities the ICTU would propose a programme for the exchange of information and experience of good practice and the earmarking of ESF funding for apprenticeship training, and more specifically training for redundant apprentices.

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## Summary – Italy

Italy has a complex system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for apprenticeship training. Governance is complex, and many different actors are involved at different levels. According to the Italian Constitution, the State has exclusive legislative powers for education, whilst the Regions have exclusive powers for vocational training.

However the basis for apprenticeship training is now to be found in the 2011 'Consolidated Act on Apprenticeships' (*Testo Unico sull'Apprendistato*).

<http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decretolegisl:2011-09-11;167@originale>

The new Law defines an apprenticeship as 'an employment contract for an indefinite period designed for the training and employment of young people' (article 1.1).

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that in 2009 there were 644,600 apprentices and 976,600 apprentice-type scheme students in Italy. Official Italian figures are, as follows: – 645,385 apprentices in 2008, 594,668 in 2009 and 541,874 in 2010, and a provisional figure of 504,558 for 2011, a clear and dramatic reduction.

An apprenticeship generally last no more than three years or five for certain crafts, as defined in the different collective agreements.

There is no fixed ratio between work-based training and school-based training, however there is a requirement that apprentices must receive a maximum of 120 hours off-the-job training over a 3-year period.

The new Law has handed governance over to the social partners, on the basis of agreements signed by representative trade unions and employers' organisations. The sectoral agreements stipulate specific rights and responsibilities, define the length of the apprenticeships, set out the training arrangements for the acquisition of occupational skills and expertise in relation to occupational profiles. The three major trade union confederations are members of the 'special technical body' established by the new Law to improve coordination on apprenticeships. In addition they have parity with employers' organisations on the Management Boards of the 21 sectoral Interprofessional Mutual Funds which finance vocational training in companies.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Apprentices' pay is decided by collective agreements. According to the 2012 Act they may be promoted up to the pay scale to within two levels of the maximum decided by the collective agreement for that pay grade, if they are carrying out the duties or functions of a skilled worker. As an alternative they may be paid on a percentage basis.

In terms of European priorities the Italian trade unions consider that any EU initiative should insist upon the involvement of trade unions in the governance of apprenticeship training and earmark ESF funds for this training.

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## Summary – Netherlands

The Netherlands has a broad-based and well regarded system of vocational education and training, which includes provision for apprenticeship training and also initial school-based training. There are two pathways for gaining a qualification: the work-based pathway, (*beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL*) and the school-based pathway (*beroepsopleidende leerweg – BOL*). The originality of the Dutch system lies in the fact that the qualifications are the same and of equal value, and so it is possible to switch from one to another.

The basis for the modern VET system is to be found in the 1995 Education and Vocational Training Act (*Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs*). Apprenticeship training focuses on the theoretical and practical preparation for the pursuit of a profession for which a vocational qualification is necessary or appropriate. Apprenticeship training also promotes general education and personal development and contributes to society (article 1.2.1.2).

The system is in a state of transition. In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science produced an Action Plan 'Focus on Craftsmanship' and handed over a central advisory role to a new foundation, 'Cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the Labour Market' (*SBB* in Dutch), which began its work in January 2012. The SBS is supported by 17 sectoral Knowledge Centres that are responsible for accreditation and assistance of work placement companies and development and maintenance of the qualifications structure.

Apprenticeships vary in duration. They can take two, three or four years to complete, depending upon the level. BBL apprentices spend a minimum of 60% of their time at the workplace; the work placement for BOL students should be a minimum of 20% of their time.

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 171,900 apprentices in 2009 in the Netherlands and 351,800 apprenticeship-style students. Official Dutch figures for 2009 show 167,100 and 348,400 respectively, with 169,100 and 356,200 for 2010, and 159,200 and 356,200 for 2011.

Trade unions and employers' organisations have equal representation on the Board of the new SBB and on its three thematic Advisory Committees (qualifications and examinations, work placement and effectiveness). Separately they decide on occupational profiles, then pass on the task of developing and/or updating qualifications to the Knowledge Centres, where they are also represented on an equal basis.

BBL-ers, but not BOL-ers, sign a work contract with an employer. Both may join trade unions, but more it is more relevant for BBL-ers who are covered by sectoral agreements.

In terms of European priorities any EU proposal should address the issue of economic growth which is essential to provide the jobs that require trained apprentices.

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## Summary – Spain

Spain is one of the three EU Member States that until very recently has only offered school-based Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET). Responsibilities are shared between the national and the regional (*Comunidades Autónomas*) levels.

The basis for this training is to be found in the Organic Law on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (2002) which establishes the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Training, the Organic Law on Education (2006) which establishes school-based vocational training including a compulsory work-based module, and a new Royal Decree, adopted in November 2012, which provides the basis for dual vocational training. The new Royal Decree presents five different ways of developing vocational training, including 'training carried out in an authorised or accredited company and a training institution, which consists of providing certain workplace modules that are complementary to those taught in the training institution' (article 3).

In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that in 2009 there were 271,300 apprenticeship-style students in Spain. Figures provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport give a figure of 167,322 IVET students that completed the compulsory work-based module in 2009/2010. The new dual vocational training system is in an experimental phase and provision is made for 4,000 apprentices.

According to the Organic Law on Education, the IVET programme lasts 2,000 hours, which is the equivalent of two school years. It should include at the end of the cycle a compulsory work-based module lasting 400-600 hours ie 20-30% of the entire training programme.

Trade unions, along with the employers' organisations, are formally consulted on the implementation of the VET system within the General Council for Vocational Training and the State School Council. The former has 77 members, 28 of which represent trade unions (four from the confederations, 20 from the teaching unions and four from the office and staff unions); the latter has 107 members, only four of which represent trade unions. Trade unions are also involved in discussions on vocational education and training within the 78 joint sectoral committees.

Up until now students have not signed a contract with an employer, are not considered as workers and on this basis could not join a trade union. As far as pay and conditions are concerned, the new Royal Decree stipulates that the remuneration of workers under contract for training and apprenticeships will be established in a collective agreement and cannot in any case be lower than the interprofessional minimum wage in line with the hours that have been worked (article 9).

In terms of European priorities, according to the Spanish unions, the EU should put forward proposals to ensure minimum standards, for training and working conditions, and also for the financing of apprenticeships.

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## Summary – United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a devolved framework for apprenticeship training, with different systems for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England it is now under review – the Richard Review.

The basis for apprenticeship training in England and Wales, for example, is to be found in The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009).

There is no specific legal definition of an apprenticeship, but a definition of the conditions that are required to complete an apprenticeship.

Statistics on the number of apprentices are difficult to reconcile. In a comparative study the European Commission estimated that there were 239,900 apprenticeship starts in the 2008/9 academic year and 279,700 apprentices in 2009 in the United Kingdom. However according to the latest figures from the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS), there were 520,600 apprenticeship starts in 2011/12, an increase of 13.9% compared to 2010/11.

Apprenticeships vary in duration. Engineering apprenticeships can take three and a half to four years to complete. Prior to August 2012, it was common for apprenticeships in hospitality to last between three and twelve months. Now it is no longer possible for apprenticeships to last less than twelve months. There is no fixed ratio between work-based training and school-based training, however there is a requirement that apprentices must receive a minimum of 280 guided learning hours, of which 100 or 30% (whichever is the greater) must be delivered off-the-job.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills provides advice on skills and employment policy to the UK government, and of the 25 Commissioners four represent trade unions. In England, for example, BIS sets out its policy priorities annually, and the Skills Funding Agency implements the Department's policy. The latter houses the National Apprenticeship Service, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) is represented on its Advisory Board. The TUC is also represented on the Apprentices Stakeholders Board which advises the National Apprenticeship Service. At sectoral level trade unions are associated with the work of some of the employer-led Sector Skills Councils.

Apprentices sign a contract with an employer, are considered as workers and on this basis may join a trade union. Where there are collective agreements, apprentices' pay would be covered along with other workers. Where there is not, there is a National Minimum Wage for apprentices, which was introduced in 2010. As of October 2013 the national minimum rates are £2.68 per hour for under-19s and for over-19s in their first year of apprenticeship. Over-19s (not in their first year) should receive more – the rate that applies to their age group; £5.03 for 18–20 year olds and £6.31 for 21 year olds and over. There is however evidence that 20% of apprentices are not paid the rate for the job.

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## Appendix 3 - Methodology

The ETUC had initially decided that the countries covered by the study would be identified by the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group, on the basis of the following qualitative and geographical criteria:

- at least three countries with an apprenticeship/dual learning system
- at least three countries that have undergone apprenticeship reforms in the recent past (since 2005)
- at least two countries that are currently undergoing reforms
- at least two countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

The first project Steering Committee meeting took place on 20 February 2013 in the offices of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). At that meeting it was decided that the most appropriate countries for examination would be Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom.

It was agreed that a unionlearn researcher would undertake a 2-days visit for each case study. The meetings would be set up by the different national members of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group. Each visit would start with an interview with the member of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group and other national trade union confederations and/or trade unions, where appropriate, followed by interviews with representatives of employers' organisations and of the public authorities, either the Ministry of Education or Labour, depending upon national circumstances. On Day 2, the

unionlearn researcher would undertake a workplace visit and, where possible and appropriate, interview the HR manager (employer), a trainer/teacher and/or an apprentice. It was agreed that the workplace visits should cover different sectors, the private and the public sector and small/medium and large enterprises.

In preparation for these visits it was also decided that the members of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group would gather material regarding apprenticeships at the national level and forward this to the unionlearn researchers, so that they would be better prepared for the national visits.

On the basis of a draft proposal for interview questions presented by unionlearn, a process of consultation began. This continued by email until 7 March 2013, when the restricted Steering Committee finalised the list of points that would make up the basis of the open interviews.

The visits were carried out from mid-April to mid-June: as follows: United Kingdom (11-12 April), Estonia (15-16 April), Spain (18-19 April), Ireland (22-23 April), Germany (14-15 May), Bulgaria (22-23 May), Italy (27-28 May), Denmark (30-31 May), Cyprus (6-7 June) and the Netherlands (10-11 June).

Interviews with trade union organisations, employers' organisations and public authorities took place in all ten countries. Workplace visits however were only appropriate for six of the countries, either because of the lack of

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dual training in some countries or because of the lack of access for a researcher commissioned by a trade union organisation. Four were in the private sector and two in the public sector. They were distributed, as follows: two large-scale national subsidiaries of multinational companies, the Guinness brewery in Dublin and Daimler Benz in Berlin; a medium-sized affiliate of a multinational company, Thermo Fisher Scientific in Roskilde; a large departmental store in Tallinn, Kaubamaja; a borough council in St Edmondbury; and the 5<sup>th</sup> Multi-Profile Hospital for Active Treatment hospital in Sofia.

After each visit the unionlearn researcher wrote a draft report – a distillation of desk research and information from the interviews – for each country and sent it to the appropriate member of the ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group for comments. Comments, often extensive, were received from 7 countries.

It became clear during the country visits that the interview questions were too numerous for the time allocated, and it became necessary to concentrate upon certain issues of practical interest to trade unions and apprentices, trade union involvement in the governance of apprenticeship systems and trade union proposals for assuring the quality of apprenticeships at the national and European levels.

The ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group met on 4 June 2013, and the unionlearn researcher gave a progress report.

A draft report was sent for comments to the ETUC and the ten national coordinators on 19 July 2013. The ETUC Lifelong Learning Working Group met again on 28/29 November 2013 and approved the final version.

All in all it has been a real team effort.

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## Appendix 5 - Persons Consulted

### Bulgaria

- Maria Andreeva, Deputy Director, Programmes and Projects, Employment Agency (*Агенция по заетостта*)
- Dr. Peter Bukov, Deputy Director, 5th Multi-Profile Hospital for Active Treatment
- Krustyo Kapanov, Honorary President, National Craft Chamber (*Национална занаятчийска камара*)
- Stefka Limanska, Head of VET, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Ivalyo Naydenov, State expert, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Diana Naydenova, Chief Expert, Labour market Department, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (*Конфедерация на независимитесиндикати в България - КНСБ*)
- Yuliya Simeonova, Executive Secretary, Education, Training & Projects' Department, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (*Конфедерация на независимитесиндикати в България - КНСБ*)
- Ivan Vladov, President, National Craft Chamber (*Национална занаятчийска камара*)

### Cyprus

- Theodoros Giovanni, Industrial Relations and Social Policy Officer, Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation
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### Denmark

- Steen Johansen, Teamleader Mouldshop, Thermo Fisher Scientific
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- Morten Smistrup, Senior Policy Officer, Department for Labour Market and Training, Landsorganisationen i Danmark
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  - Torben Strand, Site Manager, Thermo Fisher Scientific
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## Estonia

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- Elle Pütsepp, President, Eesti Teenindus- ja Kaubandustöötajate Ametiühing
- Helge Reier, Trade union representative, Kaubamaja
- Viktoria Šakreskaja, Apprentice, Kaubamaja
- Marek Sepp, Chairman, Eesti Töandjate Keskkliit
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- Piret Suitsu, Director of Customer Service and Human Resources, Kaubamaja
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- Chris Feeney, Adviser, Foras Áiseanna Saothair

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  - Martin Lynch, Assistant Director General, Foras Áiseanna Saothair
  - Tony Maher, Craft Convenor, Diageo
  - Julie Mannion, Adviser, Foras Áiseanna Saothair
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  - Jim Moore, Policy Adviser, Union of Construction Allied Trade and Technicians
  - Colin O'Brien, Site Leader, Diageo
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  - Brendan O'Sullivan, Policy Officer, Building & Allied Trades Union
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