

BUSINESSEUROPE



Creating opportunities for youth

How to improve the quality and image of
apprenticeships

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Youth Opportunities Initiative

- Published 20 December 2011
- Targets in particular the 7.5 million young Europeans who are not in employment or in education
- **Main lines of action:**
 1. Reviewing national policies and performance as part of the European semester
 2. Providing EU financial support for national and cross-border action



BUSINESSEUROPE taskforce

- Headed by Mr **Robert Mahler**, ex-President of Alstom France and himself a former apprentice;
- Composed of 10 high-level company representatives or sectoral experts;
- Developed **BUSINESSEUROPE declaration** on how to improve that quality and image of apprenticeships which was presented at Tripartite Social Summit on 1st March 2012;



Current trends

- **Skills mismatch**

- *24 million of unemployed people in Europe today*
- *4 million of unfilled vacancies (EC employment package 18 April 2012)*

- **High level of youth unemployment**

- *22.4% in average in the EU*
- *More than 30% in eight countries*

- **Future skills needs**

- *By 2020 the share of highly-qualified jobs will increase from 29% to 35%*
- *The share of medium-qualified jobs will remain around 50%*



The VET dilemma

- **The public image of Initial Vocational Education and Training**
 - *A negative perception of initial-VET in many countries*
 - *Often a default choice for young people*
- **Address the bad perception**
 - *The example of Germany: a well respected dual system with many pupils entering*
 - *Focus on the needs of young people and career opportunities*
 - *Make and promote VET as a way for young people to set up their own business*



Benefits of dual learning

- **Combining theoretical and practical skills**
 - *Part of the education takes place in a company*
 - *Companies are strongly involved in the system*
 - *Transition into the labour market is smoother*
- **An instrument of cross-fertilisation**
 - *A response to the real labour market needs*
 - *A high level of employability of apprentices*
 - *Teachers get closer to the reality of companies*



12 main recommendations

TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Allocate a share of the European Social Fund and of the Erasmus for All programme to **provide seed funding for Member States** that wish to establish or reform their dual learning systems;
2. Ensure funding for **cross-border training activities of employers' organisations** to become involved in the establishment of a dual system;
3. Support **European and national campaigns for changing the perception of vocational education**, including in the context of the Copenhagen process;
4. Organise a **regular forum for discussions on monitoring of the European apprenticeship strategy** with the relevant European and national stakeholders in this area.



12 main recommendations

TO THE MEMBER STATES

5. **Provide a well-functioning general school system** - both primary and secondary - that prepares pupils properly so that they are able to enter an apprenticeship system;
6. **Set up the framework conditions for dual learning apprenticeship systems** in accordance with their respective industrial relations systems and through cooperation between labour market and educational institutions;
7. **Integrate work-based learning in educational systems.** A significant part of the education, to be defined at national level, is to be conducted in a company with clear curricula also for the training in companies.



12 main recommendations

TO EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS

8. Take part in the governance of dual learning apprenticeship systems and **contribute to the design of curricula and their adaptation over time.**
This is an important factor to ensure their responsiveness to labour market needs and to avoid unnecessary red tape for companies;
9. **Inform and motivate companies** to become involved in the dual system, give them advice and organise cooperation between companies.



12 main recommendations

TO COMPANIES

10. **Ensure a high level of quality of training** which provide good earning potential and career opportunities, notably by ensuring that company instructors/tutors are well equipped to transfer knowledge to apprentices;
11. Sign a contract with the apprentice that includes **clear task description and working conditions** for the apprentice;
12. **Encourage employees to share their experience as former apprentices** wherever and whenever possible to promote the take-up of apprenticeships by the young generation.

