



11 March 2013

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND VET?

#### OBESSU DEBATE

#### ROBERT PLUMMER, SOCIAL AFFAIRS ADVISER, BUSINESSEUROPE

- Youth unemployment is a central concern across Europe that needs to be addressed through taking into account the specific situation of each country. Vocational education and training (VET) can certainly play a central role in facilitating young people's entry to the labour market.
- In particular, BUSINESSEUROPE advocates the principles of work-based learning and the strengthening of dual-learning elements in Member States' existing systems. Young people's transition from education to employment can be facilitated by expanding access to dual-learning systems, such as in the form of apprenticeships.
- Apprenticeships bring advantages for a range of stakeholders. For young people they provide professional experience and enhance future job prospects. Employers benefit from the output generated by apprentices, which helps to finance companies' investments as well as providing a potential future employee. For employers there is also the issue of cross-fertilisation, i.e. that an apprenticeship results in someone learning a particular skills set that can be applied to other companies operating within the same sector. National governments benefit from greater employer engagement in dual-learning schemes in the form of reduced spending and sharing the task of educating and training young people.

#### Building partnerships

- By putting labour market needs at the centre of VET and with the greater involvement of companies in the design and implementation of VET programmes, young people's prospects of successfully moving from education to employment can be significantly increased.
- Stronger partnerships are needed between education and training providers on the one hand and businesses and their representative organisations on the other in the design and implementation of VET curricula and in the provision of career guidance.
- This will help young people to be more aware of, and prepared for, the opportunities that exist when they follow a particular educational path in terms of the subjects they study or the work experience they undertake. This includes greater awareness of the importance of technical studies and the added value of apprenticeships and work-based learning for their future employability.