

## Conclusions and recommendations for dissemination

### For Lithuanian vocational training providers: Overcoming the impasse

*Apprenticeships in Lithuania: situation and challenges*

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#### Information about the event

These conclusions and recommendations were agreed at a work shop event for Lithuanian VET providers: Overcoming the impasse (Birštonas, Lithuania, 21-22 October 2022).

Funded by the German Embassy and organised by the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (AHK).

Representatives from the following institutions gave presentations at the seminar: REHAU Group, Micron, Hella; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania; the Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania; Invest Lithuania - the official government agency for foreign direct investment and business development; German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (AHK); Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK); IHK (Nuremberg) - Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI); Vocational Training Centres - Vilnius Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre and Visaginas Vocational Training Centre for Technology and Business, Kaunas Technical Vocational Training Centre. 20 participants attended the event.

The programme of the event and the list of participants are attached to this document as Annexes 1 and 2.

The findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the German Embassy in Lithuania, the members of the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (AHK) and the Lithuanian institutions that finance, administer and/or organise apprenticeships in Lithuania.

#### Objectives of the event

One of the main objectives is to bring together a wide range of professionals who implement apprenticeships in practice, as well as representatives of institutions that organise or fund apprenticeships, in order to explore the challenges of apprenticeships in Lithuania from different perspectives.

The second objective is to find solutions to improve apprenticeship processes in Lithuania, drawing on the diverse experiences of participants and the German dual training model.

The third objective is to create new and effective networks for the development of apprenticeships in Lithuania.

#### General conclusions and recommendations

##### Legal regulation

- Lithuania has a fully functioning legal framework to regulate apprenticeships. However, it is recommended to harmonise the implementation of apprenticeship arrangements between different public authorities to make the process of apprenticeship implementation clearer and simpler for providers, especially companies.

##### Apprentices' salary

- In Lithuania, often in some sectors (e.g. some manufacturing industries), apprentices' wages often remain unchanged or increase only slightly after the apprenticeship is over and they start working in the company

where they were trained. In Germany, apprentices' salaries under an apprenticeship contract range from €550 in the first year to over €800 in the third year. Once the apprentice has completed his/her training, the apprentice signs an employment contract and his/her salary doubles. In Lithuania, apprentices receive a stipend of between €60 and €300 for their training and a salary from the company, which is often low because apprentices have no experience. It would be appropriate to increase the salary of apprentices who have completed their training more substantially in order to motivate them to stay in the same company. This would also increase interest in apprenticeships and the supply of skilled workers on the labour market. In Germany, apprentices' salaries under an apprenticeship contract range from €550 in the first year to over €800 in the third year. Once the apprentice has completed his/her training, the apprentice signs an employment contract and his/her salary doubles. In Lithuania, apprentices receive a stipend of between €60 and €300 for their training and a salary from the company, which is often low because apprentices have no experience. It would be appropriate to increase the salary of apprentices who have completed their training more substantially in order to motivate them to stay in the same company. This would also increase interest in apprenticeships and the supply of skilled workers on the labour market.

- Apprentices' wages should be subsidised more heavily. Higher tax incentives for companies employing apprentices would help to reduce unemployment, attract more apprentices to apprenticeships, and pay off in the longer term in terms of value added to the economy.

## Organisation

Detailed apprenticeship schemes need to be developed for enterprises, in line with existing legislative frameworks

## Administration

- e procedures.
- The administrative burden on businesses needs to be reduced and a single integrated inter-institutional database for apprenticeship administration needs to be created. The example of Germany, where companies do not have to complete additional documentation, is worth studying, as the administration of the training process is integrated with the company's other billing processes. Apprenticeships organised and funded by different ministries in Lithuania have different implementation schemes and different administration documentation. Companies report the same data to different authorities. It would be appropriate to review the nature of the information collected by the MoLSA, the Employment Service, and the MoLSA and EIM projects financing apprenticeships, and to look into the possibility of extracting the data from state-managed databases, and to assess the possibility of dispensing with the need to complete some of the documentation.

## On-the-job learning

- In Lithuania, apprenticeships are often equated with on-the-job training. On-the-job training is an important part of vocational training, including apprenticeships. However, on-the-job training alone would not enable an apprentice to become an educated person, to understand the links between practical skills and theoretical knowledge, to acquire general competences and social skills in interacting with other apprentices and teachers. It is the general education and competences of the individual that are important, not just the occupation or practical skills for a particular job. Therefore, the most sustainable apprenticeship model, which is fair to all parties, is one in which a company runs an apprenticeship together with a training institution.

## Communication between apprentices

- Communication between enterprises and VET institutions is often based on different values. Companies are seeking to make profits, reduce costs, costs and time loss, and are therefore suspicious of

apprenticeship training, the requirement to appoint a master trainer, the need to fill in additional documentation, and the need to release their own employees to the training institution. Companies are more inclined to train only in the competences/functions required for a specific job. Vocational training institutions aim to meet the needs of the company, but also aim to provide the learner with a broader education, to increase his/her employability on the labour market, and to provide qualifications. In the longer term, apprenticeships provide benefits for all apprenticeship participants, so communication between enterprises and training institutions should not only be based on a discussion of the immediate benefits, but also on a longer-term perspective - six months, a year or several years from now.

- Communication between VET institutions and enterprises is key to organising apprenticeships - selecting apprentices, identifying competences that can be acquired in the workplace, managing documentation, and drawing up plans and timetables for on-the-job training. A good apprenticeship outcome can be achieved when the parties have clarified their expectations of each other, and when there is close cooperation and smooth communication.

### **Awareness of apprenticeships**

- In 2020, only 34 out of 61 vocational training institutions provide apprenticeships, and only 3% of apprentices complete their training as apprentices. "A survey of enterprises carried out by Kurk Lietuva in 2020 showed that around 70% of enterprises had never been involved in apprenticeships, and one in two did not know what an apprenticeship was. The conclusion is that it is necessary to seek measures and changes in the apprenticeship chain to increase the visibility, attractiveness and benefits of apprenticeships.
- Employers have too little information about apprenticeships to be interested in them and to know where to start. Active dissemination of information on apprenticeships to businesses is needed, informing them about the benefits of apprenticeships and providing clear steps for apprenticeship implementation.
- It is appropriate to disseminate good practices of companies that have successfully organised apprenticeships.
- Business associations and the various Chambers of Commerce should be fully empowered to provide information on apprenticeships and should be encouraged to disseminate it to their members in the most effective formats through targeted support measures.
- There are 61 vocational training institutions in Lithuania, of which 42 have sectoral vocational training centres with modern facilities. All VET institutions have renovated buildings and classrooms. It is important to show this progress in order to improve the attitude of future apprentices and enterprises towards VET institutions.
- It is appropriate to organise active dissemination measures for all the main target groups of apprenticeships - apprentices, their parents, employers, training institutions and business associations.
- It is recommended to involve youth influencers in the dissemination of information on apprenticeships.
- The prestige of vocational training also depends on the public presentation of people with blue-collar professions or craftsmen. Career development should start at an early age, in line with German experience. If pupils were given an attractive, regular and targeted introduction in schools to what people in different professions do 'all day' and to their well-being in life, pupils and their parents would be more likely to make a career choice.
- Parents have a strong influence on their children's choice of career or studies. It is important to target information about apprenticeships and vocational training in general at the parents of pupils, and to try to convey good examples.

### **Providing information about apprenticeships**

- The website [www.pameistryste.lt](http://www.pameistryste.lt), maintained by the Centre for the Development of Qualifications and Vocational Training under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Apprenticeship Sub-department of the Consultancy and Information Division, which coordinates the

website, provides a lot of useful information on apprenticeship, as well as information, consultancy, methodological, administrative, organisational assistance, and problem-solving support, not only to the companies applying, but to the training institutions and apprenticeships. Efforts should be made to ensure the continued management of this website through targeted funding to ensure that the information it provides is relevant, attractive, user-friendly, up-to-date and structured. It should also ensure the visibility of the website among the target groups.

- Vocational training institutions should regularly send information to be hosted on [www.pameistryste.lt](http://www.pameistryste.lt) on the availability of apprentices for companies, providing information on training programmes and other services available.

### **Consultancy, business assistance**

- It is recommended to develop a mechanism to provide practical advice to enterprises on the implementation of apprenticeships. In Germany, active advice and support for companies in preparing for on-the-job training is provided by the Chamber's Consultants, who visit companies and provide support. A possible solution in Lithuania is to use the Apprenticeship Sub-department of the Consultancy and Information Division of the Centre for the Development of Qualifications and Vocational Training to inform and/or train the Chamber's staff to provide appropriate synchronised information on apprenticeships.

### **Quality of training and confidence in vocational training**

- Training institutions should be proactive in communicating with business, not be afraid to actively present their services, and work together with companies to adapt the content of training. A pro-active approach and an effort to adapt to the needs of enterprises increases the confidence of enterprises in apprenticeships.
- Vocational training institutions should have the right training content and adapt it to the needs of enterprises, so that businesses trust vocational training and apprenticeships. On the other hand, enterprises should be aware of the need for the apprentice to have a broader and deeper knowledge and depth than is required for the specific job in order to ensure his/her employability on the labour market.
- The competence of vocational teachers is one of the most important keys to the quality of vocational training. Vocational teachers need to continuously update their practical knowledge through placements in enterprises and in-service training. This area should be better funded.
- Company masters should have the right competences to train young people in the workplace, as they not only prepare the worker for a specific job, but also shape the young person's professional identity and personality.
- In Germany, all companies involved in apprenticeships must meet certain requirements. In Lithuania, there is no control yet over the readiness of companies to provide all the competences included in the training programme. While this would be important for quality assurance, especially given that companies provide 70% of all training, control would only further reduce the attractiveness of apprenticeships. Unless there are mentoring and attractive financial support packages in place for companies, monitoring the readiness of companies to provide training is not appropriate.

### **Monitoring apprenticeships**

- It is recommended to develop a national monitoring mechanism for apprenticeships, measuring more indicators. In particular, it is important to carry out apprenticeship cost-benefit analyses on a regular basis (quarterly, semi-annually or annually), based on methodologies that have been proven in other countries, and to make the results available to enterprises.

### **Apprenticeship schemes**

- It is recommended to distinguish between the concepts of apprenticeship as a form of organisation and apprenticeship as a method of learning in order to match the potential of Lithuanian companies to organise apprenticeships. Looking at the example of Germany, where the timetable for alternating vocational

training in a vocational training institution with training in a company is enshrined in legislation, one gets the impression that the essence of apprenticeship is precisely the alternation of training location. However, what is important in an apprenticeship is the very fact of combining the acquisition of general and vocational knowledge and initial practical skills in a training establishment with on-the-job training. It is important that this matching is convenient for the company, the training institution and the apprentice. In Lithuania, companies are expressing the need to recruit apprentices who have already received sufficient training from a vocational training institution, who know how to work safely and who are able to handle tools and expensive equipment properly. The following apprenticeship scheme should be made available. Currently, one possible apprenticeship scheme, organised through the Employment Service, requires an employer from day one. It would be worth reviewing this scheme in order to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships for businesses.

### **Specific initiatives to improve apprenticeships**

#### **Working Group on options for reducing the administrative burden of apprenticeships**

- The participants agreed to set up a working group with the participation of representatives from Invest Lithuania, the Employment Service, the Centre for the Development of Qualifications and Vocational Training, and the Vilnius-Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre. The aim was to review the administrative documents on apprenticeship and to make proposals on which ones could be eliminated by taking information from common databases.

#### **Working Group on developing detailed apprenticeship delivery schemes**

- It was agreed to work together to develop detailed apprenticeship schemes for companies, in line with existing legal frameworks. Consideration will be given to the possibility of making them available in an interactive electronic form.

#### **Development of cooperation**

- The Marijampolė LEZ (Free Economic Zone) will seek closer links with vocational training institutions in the region.

#### **Raising awareness about apprenticeships**

- Participants agreed to send apprenticeship-related information to the [pameistryste.lt](http://pameistryste.lt) website.