



**REGIONAL WORKSHOP**  
**Work-based Learning in Vocational Education and Training**  
**Enhanced Competitiveness and Employability through Innovative Work-based**  
**Learning**  
**Vienna, October 13-14, 2014**

**RESULTS OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS**

**PARTICIPANTS:** representatives of Ministries of Education and Labour, social partners, companies and VET agencies from Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Romania.

**Focus of workshop discussions:**

Based on good practice examples from participating countries the workshop focused on two thematic priorities:

- a) **Winning companies as responsible partners for WBL-** How to introduce work-based learning sustainably into education and training systems, which do not have a long tradition of WBL?
- b) **Quality assurance in work-based learning**

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION IDENTIFIED DURING THE WORKSHOP**

**a) Winning companies as responsible partners for WBL**

Based on good practice examples from Romania and Montenegro participants identified the following priority areas (country specific priorities cf. flip-chart protocol):

- **Raising awareness of companies for the relevance of WBL** by taking good practices as starting point, i.e. winning practitioners, especially companies, which are already involved in WBL as role-models/spokespersons, e.g. in the media/social media, for WBL as an instrument for increasing quality and relevance of WBL – at national, regional and local level.
- **Raising awareness of the public, especially of parents and students for the potential of work-based learning as a new and attractive learning pathway**, which offers labour market relevant formats of learning and increases the chances of a smooth transition from training to work, e.g. by producing promotion videos, creating information platforms (cf. Romanian example) or using social media
- **Developing a clear concept of work-based learning** tailor-made for the respective national framework: as there are many different forms of work-based learning – from short periods of internships/“praktika” to the classical dual system with 70/80% of learning in a company - the most suitable format/s for WBL (different sectors, differing sizes/numbers of companies, strengths of social partners, training needs of different learners, etc) need/s to be identified in a dialogue between all major stakeholders. Depending on the format/s chosen clear concepts of WBL with clear identification of roles/responsibilities and training outcomes need to be developed and communicated at national, regional and local level to all stakeholders. A respective legal framework needs to be created.

- **Establishing clear and effective structures/formats for cooperation and communication amongst major stakeholders** - at national, branch and local level
- **Enhancing career guidance and counselling services:** Given the wide choice of career options students need enhanced support in making informed choices, especially with regard to pathways which include elements of WBL in order to ensure that the learning opportunity a company offers fits the needs of the student. Existing career guidance and counselling services need to be further developed to meet these new needs.
- **Professional development of VET teachers and trainers/mentors in companies:** further training needs exist both on the side of VET teachers (learning more about the world of work) and possible trainers/student mentors at companies (learning more about organising learning processes)
- **Identifying possible incentives for companies for participating in the training process of young people:** in order to enhance scope and quality of WBL options for incentives to companies need to be developed.
- **Development of strategies to move from piloting to introduction of WBL at system level**

#### **b) Quality assurance in work-based learning**

Based on good practice examples from Austria and the Czech Republic participants identified the following priority areas (country specific priorities cf. flip-chart protocol) for developing quality in work-based learning.

- **Developing coherent quality assurance mechanisms for WBL** with a focus on quality development (Plan- Do-Check-Act) and not quality control.
- **Development of standards for work-based learning in co-operation with companies/social partners** which define quality criteria for WBL taking into account that learning at the work-place differs from learning in the class-room.
- **Development of new formats/standards of student assessment for WBL in co-operation with companies/social partners and involving them in the assessment process:** as work based learning differs from learning in the class-room formats and standards for student assessment need to be adjusted and companies/social partners more strongly involved.
- **Clarification of roles and responsibilities** for WBL as well as quality assurance in WBL between schools and companies as well as stakeholders at all levels
- **Development of support structures for WBL** – supporting both companies and VET schools in the organisation of WBL. Possible options for such support structures: contact persons at schools for the organisation of WBL, apprenticeship offices run by social partners or other stakeholders, etc.
- **Enhanced capacity development** – training options for VET teachers in companies, training offers for student mentors in companies
- **Development of quality criteria for the selection/accreditation of companies as possible WBL providers**
- **Enhanced career guidance services for better matching needs of students with needs of companies**
- **Development of a clear legal framework for WBL**

## **NEXT STEPS – TOWARDS A JOINT PROJECT**

### **Funding option: Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020**

#### **a) Preliminary Information on the programme:**

**Till end of 2014:** Programming finalised

**First half of 2015:** establishment of programme co-ordination office in Budapest and national programme offices, finalisation of programme guidelines

**Ca. Mid 2015:** First call

**Autumn/winter 2015:** first deadline for application

**Spring/summer 2016:** Expected project start; IPA/ENI countries: ca **autumn 2016** (need for conclusion of financial agreement)

**Eligible partners:** national, regional and local authorities; public equivalent bodies (bodies disposing of more than 50% public funds and/or 50% of public representatives in their board); private bodies (NGOs, companies) – potential differences in eligible partners from EU, IPA, ENI countries – still need to be decided

**Scope of participating countries/partners:** ideally 7-8 countries, 8-12 partner institutions

**Eligible costs:** staff costs, office and administrative costs, travel and accommodation costs, external expertise, equipment expenditure:

**Funding:** up to 85% of project costs EU funded, 15% co-financing by partners (ENI possible 90% EU funding); half yearly financial reporting – 100% pre-financing;

#### **b) Next steps**

- Based on the outcome of the workshop in Vienna, the recommendations will be clustered and operationalized. In January we will share this draft project concept with workshop participants
- February – June: once the financial guidelines, eligibility criteria and programme priorities have been finalised and are publicly available, partner countries need to decide on participation in the project
- July: depending on the number of countries/institutions interested in participation, decision on whether to go ahead with the project application process