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Putting into practice the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships – implementation of the Council Recommendation by Member States

Contents

1. Executive Summary 2
2. Introduction 2
3. Common understanding and regulatory frameworks on apprenticeships in the EU Member States 4
4. Member States' compliance with EFQEA criteria: State of play and progress made 6
4.1 State of play (September 2020) 6
4.2. Progress made since the adoption of the Framework (March 2018 - September 2020) . 9
5. Other aspects of EFQEA implementation at national level 12
5.1. Involvement of social partners 12
5.2. Supporting gender equality in apprenticeships 13
5.3 Implementing measures in national reform programmes 14
5.4 Using EU funds for apprenticeships 15
6. Additional support for apprenticeships at EU level 16
6.1 Apprenticeship Support Services 16
6.2. Awareness raising 17
6.3. Funding 17
7. Remaining challenges 18
8. Conclusions 20

1. Executive Summary

In March 2018, following a consultation of cross-industry European social partners and an opinion of the tripartite Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT), EU Member States agreed on a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA). The framework aims to ensure that apprenticeships respond to the needs of both apprentices and employers throughout the European Union.[1] The European Commission committed to report on the implementation of the framework within three years from the date of its adoption.

This Staff Working Document (SWD) presents the state of play of implementation of the Council Recommendation as of September 2020. The analysis is based on input provided in the 2nd half of 2020 and in early 2021 by all EU Member States, as well as European and national social partners and members of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA).

The analysis focuses in particular on how Member States have been putting in practice the 14 criteria for quality and effective apprenticeships set out in the EFQEA. It also describes further aspects related to the implementation at national level (involvement of social partners, gender equality, national reform programmes, use of EU funds). It presents how the European Commission supported Member States in the implementation and summarises remaining challenges. The Annex describes the key features of apprenticeships in each Member State.

Key findings show that, of the overall 14 criteria, the 7 criteria on learning and working conditions are in place in the majority of Member States, while further progress is needed in implementing the 7 criteria on framework conditions. This suggests that in the future additional attention should be devoted in particular to implementing this second set of criteria, and especially to flexible pathways (criterion 11), career guidance (criterion 12), transparency (criterion 13) and quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14). The specific modalities in which the individual criteria are implemented and the interplay between criteria (e.g. the type of written agreements used and the impact this has on social protection and working conditions of apprentices) may also point to the need for further improvements on a case-by-case basis.

The report indicates that the Framework supports Member States in an incremental, continuous improvement of their apprenticeship schemes, including on those criteria that were already partially in place in 2018. In conclusion, the analysis confirms that the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships continues to be relevant and up to date, and that it remains a key instrument to enhance the quality of apprenticeships across the EU.

2. Introduction

Apprenticeships are a particularly effective form of work-based learning in vocational education and training that ease the transition from education and training into work. They provide the skills that employers need, and enhance the competitiveness and productivity of companies and workplaces. They can play a key role in the green and digital transitions. Due

[1] (2018/C 153/01) See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1526484102559&uri=CELEX:32018H0502%2801%29

to their proven effectiveness in easing people's access to the labour market, and improving their career chances, apprenticeships have been a policy priority in the EU in recent years. Most Member States have been pursuing significant apprenticeship reforms, and there is a strong push to boost apprenticeship supply.

However, the positive effects of apprenticeships on labour market conditions and youth employability depend on their quality and their effectiveness.

Therefore on 15 March 2018, EU Member States agreed on a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA) with the aim to ensure that apprenticeships respond to the needs of both apprentices and employers throughout the European Union.[2] The Framework sets out 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, ensuring both the development of job-related skills and the personal development of apprentices. It takes into account the diversity of vocational education and training (VET) systems across the EU and respects the Member States' competence in the area of VET.

The 14 criteria for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships are:

7 criteria for learning and working conditions:	**7 criteria for framework conditions:**
1. *Written agreement*	1. *Regulatory framework*
2. *Learning outcomes*	2. *Involvement of social partners*
3. *Pedagogical support*	3. *Support for companies*
4. *Workplace component*	4. *Flexible pathways and mobility*
5. *Pay or compensation*	5. *Career guidance and awareness raising*
6. *Social protection*	6. *Transparency*
7. *Work, health and safety conditions*	7. *Quality assurance and tracking of apprentices*

The framework contributes to the EU's priority on jobs, growth and investment, to the European Green Deal[3] and to the European Pillar of Social Rights, which states amongst other that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning (principle 1) and that young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving education (principle 4).

Respecting EFQEA is also key for the successful implementation of the Renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships, as announced by the Commission's communication of 1 July 2020 on Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation[4]. The quality of apprenticeships plays an important role also in the context of the Council Recommendation on the reinforced Youth Guarantee,[5] which recommends that Member States 'ensure that apprenticeship offers adhere to the minimum standards laid out in the EFQEA'. The framework is also an important pillar within the implementation of the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[6]. In a broader context, the successful implementation of the NextGenerationEU recovery plan and particularly that of the Effective

[2] (2018/C 153/01) See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1526484102559&uri=CELEX:32018H0502%2801%29
[3] COM(2019) 640 final: EUR-Lex - 52019DC0640 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[4] COM(2020) 276 final: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1594047420340&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0276
[5] (2020/C 372/01). See https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11320-2020-INIT/en/pdf
[6] (2020/C 417/01): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29

Active Support to Employment ("EASE")[7] also requires that apprenticeships are of high quality, as stipulated in paragraph 7 of EASE.

Paragraph 23 of the Recommendation stipulates that the European Commission will report to the Council on the implementation of the Framework within three years from the date of its adoption. This Staff Working Document summarises how the Council Recommendation was put into practice by Member States. The analysis is based on three major sources of input provided in the 2nd half of 2020:

- a survey of 27 EU Member States,
- a consultation of national social partners that are members of the Advisory Committee of Vocational Training (ACVT), and
- a consultation of members of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

In addition to government replies, 82 stakeholder contributions were received: 53 concerned a specific Member State, and 29 considered the whole EU.

The combined results from the stakeholder surveys and Member State reporting were complemented with additional desk research on apprenticeship systems in the EU in order to provide an up-to-date picture on the state of play of the implementation of the framework in the EU Member States, three years after its adoption.

The next chapter explains the common understanding of apprenticeships at EU level and presents on overview of regulatory frameworks in the Member States. Chapter 4 describes the state of play regarding its implementation as of September 2020 and analyses the progress made since the adoption of the Council Recommendation. Chapter 5 follows the structure of the Council Recommendation and describes other aspects related to the implementation at national level (involvement of social partners, gender equality, national reform programmes, use of EU funds), while chapter 6 presents the support by the European Commission (Apprenticeship Support Services, awareness raising, EU funding). Chapter 7 summarises remaining challenges, before drawing some conclusions in chapter 8. The Annex describes the key features of and main developments in relation to apprenticeships since 2018 for each Member State.

3. Common understanding and regulatory frameworks on apprenticeships in the EU Member States

Creating a European definition of apprenticeships proved to be a challenge already at the time of the adoption of the EFQEA Council Recommendation. This was mainly due to the different national definitions and the diversity of national legislative frameworks. According to Cedefop's database on apprenticeship schemes,[8] with the exception of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, all Member States have a clear definition of apprenticeships embedded in

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/commission-recommendation-effective-active-support-employment-ease_en
[8] See https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches

national legislation. As a result of the Council Recommendation, Member States have agreed on a common understanding of apprenticeships:

'Without any prejudice to national terminology, apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that

a) combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces,

b) lead to nationally recognised qualifications,

c) are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentices, the employer and where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution, and

d) with the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the work-based component.

There are a number of examples that showcase the diversity of apprenticeship systems across the EU. One is in terms of requirements in national legislation to spend time training in the workplace. Austria, Estonia, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands are countries where learners spend a large amount of time training in the workplace. Belgium (fr)[9], Croatia, Cyprus, France and Spain, on the other hand, are examples of more 'school-based' apprenticeship schemes, with most of the training time spent in schools.

Depending on the level at which apprenticeships are offered, differences also exist between countries in terms of whether or not the apprenticeship leads to a nationally recognised qualification. Only a few Member States currently offer apprenticeships at tertiary level (Germany, Italy and Spain), and most Member States offer apprenticeships at upper-secondary level. Not all of the qualifications obtained through apprenticeships are equivalent to regular school education qualifications and allow access to further studies.

There are also differences between Member States in terms of the type and amount of compensation received by apprentices, usually depending on the legal status of the learner, being an employee (wage) or a student (compensation).

Looking at the different types of legislation covering apprenticeships, it is possible to distinguish three country clusters:

- countries where apprenticeships are regulated by legislation covering apprenticeships exclusively. Examples of this are Belgium (nl) (decrees on the system of learning and working of 2008 and dual learning of 2016), Belgium (fr) (cooperation agreement on alternance training of 2015), Denmark (the 1937 Apprenticeship Act) and Ireland (Apprenticeship Bill).

- countries where apprenticeship legislation is fully embedded in wider VET or education legislation, often the case in countries where apprentices are seen as 'learners'. An example is the Netherlands, where all aspects of apprenticeships are covered by the Law on Education and Vocational Education of 1995. This is also the case in Croatia and Hungary, where apprenticeships are regulated by the Primary, Secondary and VET Education Acts of 2008, 2009 and 2018 (Croatia) and VET legislation of 2018 (Hungary).

[9] Due to the regionalisation of competences in Belgium, the French speaking community (BEfr) and Flanders (BEnl) are treated separately.

- countries, where apprenticeships are regulated by a mix of VET, education and labour/employment law. This is often the case in countries where apprenticeships are seen as a form of 'employment' rather than 'learning'. In Bulgaria, Lithuania and Luxembourg, for example, the employment contract as a specific element of apprenticeships is regulated separately through their national labour codes.

4. Member States' compliance with EFQEA criteria: State of play and progress made

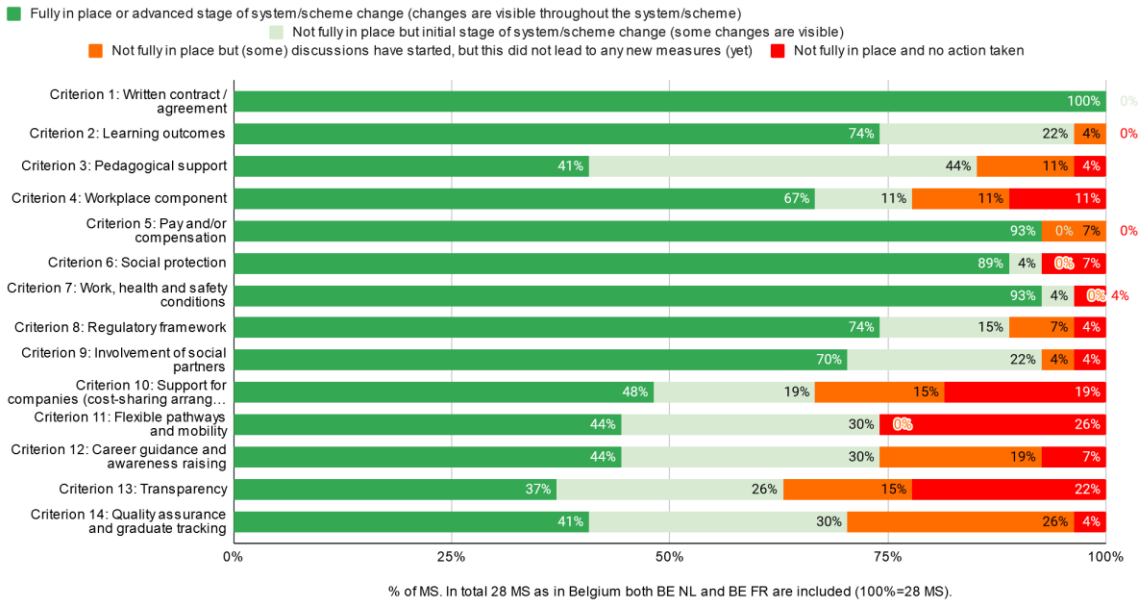
4.1 State of play (September 2020)

The analysis of government replies to the Commission's survey shows that, by September 2020, most governments consider the 14 criteria for quality and effective apprenticeships to be generally well covered in their apprenticeship schemes. Some criteria are in place in all or a large majority of Member States (such as Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement); other criteria are only fully in place in one-third of the Member States. Criteria that are least covered concern criterion 13 (transparency), 14 (quality assurance and graduate tracking), 11 (flexible pathways and mobility), and 10 (support for companies. The criteria for learning and working conditions (criterion 1-7) are in general better implemented than the criteria for framework conditions (criterion 8-14).

Figure 1 provides an overview of the state of play as of September 2020, taking into account any developments since 2018. This figure differentiates between:

- 'fully in place or advanced stage of system/scheme change' (green);
- 'not fully in place but initial stage of system/scheme change' (light green);
- 'not fully in place but (some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)' (orange);
- 'not fully in place and no action taken' (red).

Figure 1: State of Play on all EFQEA criteria (September 2020)



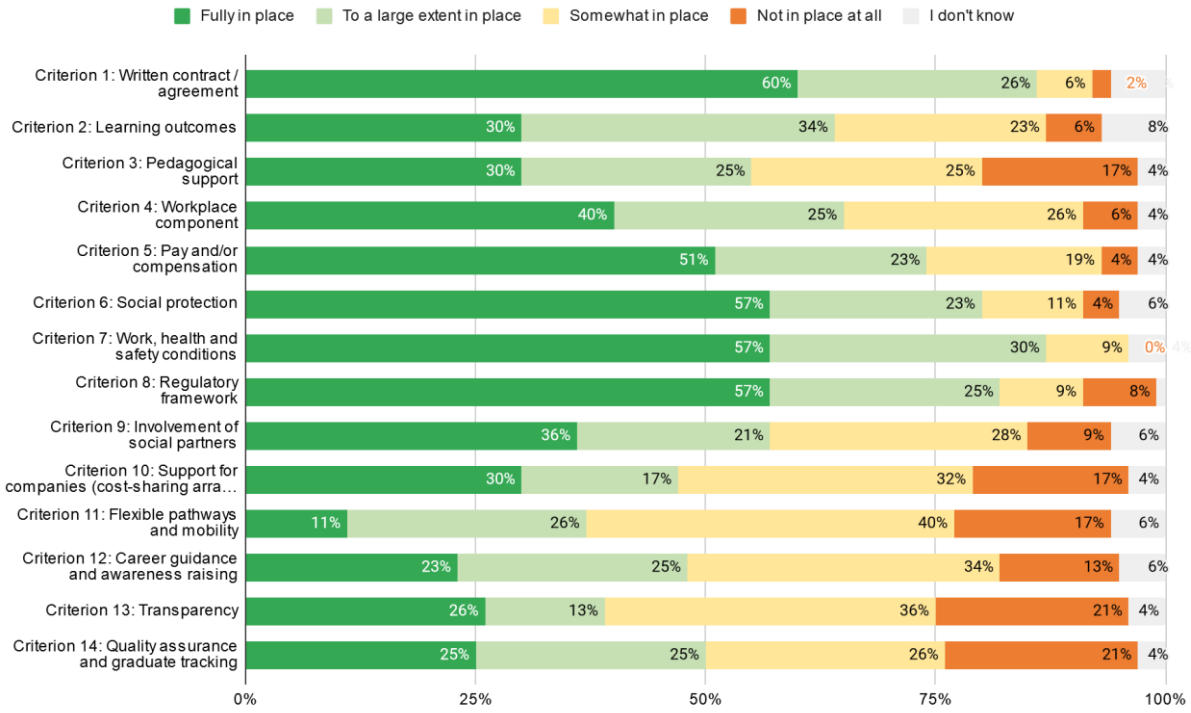
Source: Based on EU Member State reporting in January 2021. [10]

Figure 1 indicates that there are four EFQEA criteria put in place in more than three-quarters of the Member States (criterion 1, 5, 6, and 7). Four other criteria are implemented in more than half of the Member States (criterion 2, 4, 8, 9). Another six criteria are covered in less than half of the Member States (criterion 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14). The state of play in each Member State can be found in the country fiches in the annex.

Further to national governments, stakeholders were also asked to reflect on the state of play. The results of the stakeholder survey are presented in Figure 2. The stakeholder survey confirms the general trend on which EFQEA criteria are best covered and which the least. However, the stakeholders are less positive about whether the criteria are fully covered in their own Member State. This indicates that for a proper implementation of the Framework a better involvement of stakeholders in needed in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes.

[10] No data is included for Slovakia, as there are no apprenticeship schemes in the country. The data for Czechia applies to the country's wider VET scheme and work-based learning, as there are also no official apprenticeship schemes in the country.

Figure 2: Stakeholder survey on State of Play September 2020 on all EFQEA criteria per Member State (n=53)



Source: *Based on reporting by stakeholders in September 2020.*[11]

To conclude, some key criteria, including pay or compensation (criterion 5), social protection (criterion 6) and work, health and safety conditions (criterion 7) are rather well covered, and non-governmental stakeholders also confirm governments' evaluation. In general, criteria for learning and working conditions (criterion 1-7) are better implemented than the criteria for framework conditions (criterion 8-14). This suggests that in the future additional attention should be devoted to this second set of criteria, in particular to flexible pathways (criterion 11), career guidance (criterion 12), transparency (criterion 13) and quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14).

It is interesting to compare the above analysis to the one published by Cedefop in March 2021[12]. Cedefop groups certain criteria together due to their complementarity. This grouping highlights the internal links between several criteria and the possible impact of certain criteria on others. Overall, the Cedefop analysis based on 16 Member States confirms the Commission's assessment that the criteria for learning and working conditions are in place to a considerable extent. Cedefop further points out that, even if a written agreement is foreseen in all Member States they covered, the type of the agreement may have an impact on apprentice social protection and working conditions. Apprentices tend to benefit less from social protection and employment protection if they are not covered by a labour contract. Similar concerns exist regarding pay or compensation: while apprentices are usually paid or

[11] No data is included for Slovakia, as there are no apprenticeship schemes in the country. The data for Czechia applies to the country's wider VET scheme and work-based learning, as there are also no official apprenticeship schemes in the country.
[12] EFQEA Implementation: A Cedefop analysis and main findings; Cedefop, March 2021; https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4195_en.pdf

otherwise compensated, the level of pay or compensation varies largely across Member States and apprenticeship schemes.

The generally weaker implementation of framework conditions is mostly due to the fact that these criteria require systemic changes at national level. Such changes need time: for example, even if regulatory frameworks are mostly in place, Member States and relevant stakeholders are often facing difficulties in reaching a shared understanding of the apprenticeship function, purpose and value.

4.2. Progress made since the adoption of the Framework (March 2018 - September 2020)

Since the adoption of the Council Recommendation in March 2018, 11 Member States reported apprenticeship reforms or amendments to existing apprenticeships legislation[13].

Comprehensive reforms took place in Belgium (nl)[14] where a new decree on dual learning provides a legislative framework for apprenticeships in secondary education; in Finland with the new VET Act integrating work based learning into the VET system; and in Lithuania that created a common understanding and framework for the implementation of VET in the form of apprenticeship training.

Amendments to existing legislation took place in Austria, aiming at shorter VET training and inter-company training; in Bulgaria with new requirements to ensure quality and a regular update of school curricula; in Croatia where the Act on VET was amended and an experimental dual education programme was launched; in Hungary where the role of chambers in matching pupils to companies was strengthened; in Luxembourg, where the rights and duties of apprentices were clarified; in Malta, where 6 new apprenticeship programmes were launched; in the Netherlands where VET institutions are now free to offer a great variety of minors[15]; and in Poland, where amendments aimed to restore the prestige of VET and adjust the sectoral VET school system to the needs of the modern economy.

Two Member States also reported developing new plans concerning apprenticeships and VET (IE, ES). In Spain, for example, the government adopted a new plan for the modernisation of VET in July 2020, and in Ireland, a successor to the current Action Plan on Apprenticeships and Traineeships is currently being prepared.

Six Member States created supporting measures for VET provisions (Belgium(fr), Denmark, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden). For example, cooperation agreements to increase the attractiveness of VET were created in Denmark (enhancing the involvement of employers, local authorities and other actors already at primary and lower secondary levels to raise children's appetite towards VET) and in Slovenia (promotional campaigns for VET). Two Member States also established expert groups in support of apprenticeships (Italy, Spain). Four Member States also provided financial support measures for VET institutions and companies to develop and offer apprenticeships (Czechia, France, Latvia, Sweden).

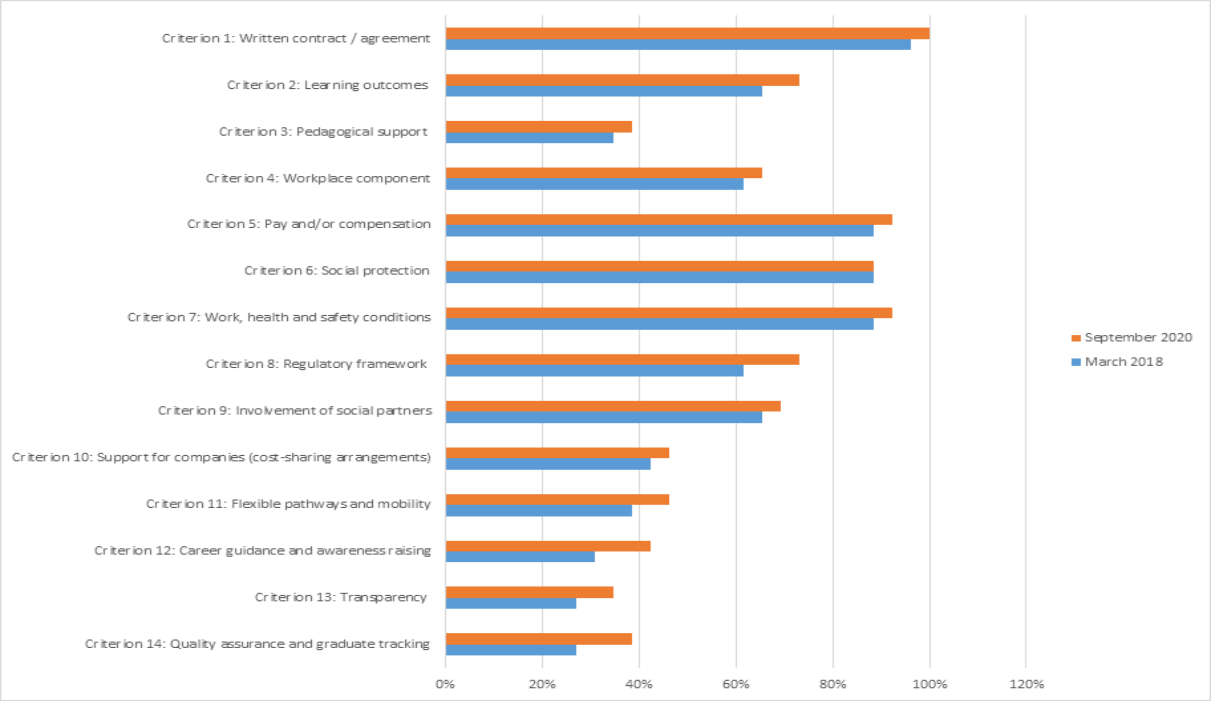
[13] Austria, Belgium/Flanders, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland.
[14] Flanders
[15] Minors no longer have to lead to a qualification and are available to students from other institutions.

More specifically, five Member States (Belgium(fr), Croatia, Luxemburg, Portugal and Spain) launched pilot projects to either reinforce or expand apprenticeships in the country. For example, Portugal is piloting the project "Learning Gives Employment" ("Aprendizagem Dá Emprego") in the tourism sector and in Luxembourg a new VET programme was piloted with 80 participants (Diploma+) that consisted of individually certified modules to help provide apprenticeships with transversal and academic skills to enter the labour market or pursue higher education studies.

The analysis of Member State reporting on compliance with EFQEA criteria in March 2018 and in September 2020 confirms that the above mentioned reforms and measures had a positive impact on EFQEA implementation. While by March 2018 many Member States already complied with a large share of the 14 EFQEA criteria, further improvements in the coverage of criteria are visible. For most criteria, it comes down to one or two more Member States having the criterion fully in place. Most developments seem to have taken place in relation to criterion 2 (learning outcomes), 8 (regulatory framework), 11 (flexible pathways and mobility), 12 (career guidance), 13 (transparency) and 14 (quality assurance). While progress in terms of moving from 'not in place' to 'fully in place' is limited, within the limited two-year timeframe, many Member States showed important developments in relation to the EFQEA criteria. The COVID-19 pandemic has not been helpful either to make substantial changes to apprenticeship systems in the last year (see more in section 7).

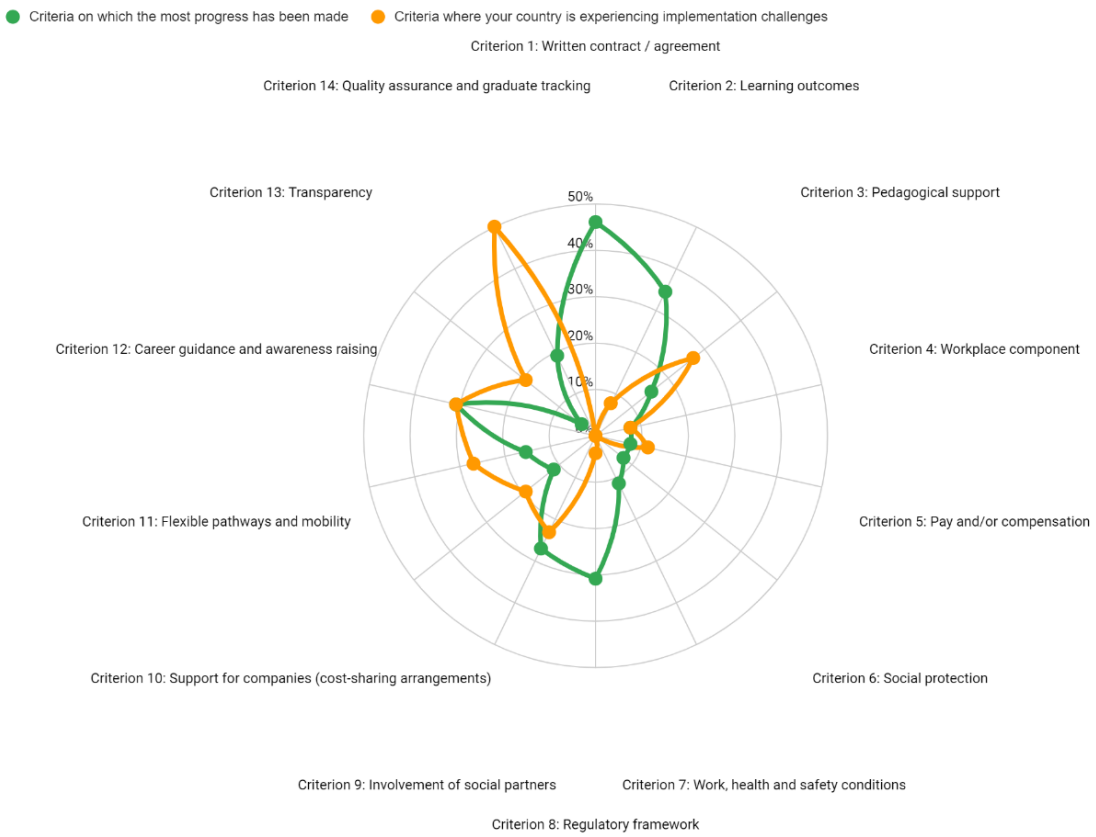
Figure 3 compares the progression between March 2018 and September 2020 relating to whether the EFQEA criteria are fully in place. The figure shows that overall progress has been made, but generally framework conditions are implemented at a lower level as they require long term systemic change at national level.

Figure 3: State of Play in March 2018 and September 2020 on all EFQEA criteria



When asked about which three EFQEA criteria Member States saw most progress and most implementation challenges, the following overview emerged (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Criteria assessed as seeing most progress and most implementation challenges



Source: Based on EU Member State reporting in January 2021.

In response to the question on which three EFQEA criteria Member States have made most progress, they report that most changes took place in relation to criterion 1 (written contract), criterion 2 (learning outcomes), and criterion 12 (career guidance). The most implementation challenges were reported in relation to criterion 14 (quality assurance and graduate tracking), criterion 12 (career guidance), criterion 11 (flexible pathways and mobility), and criterion 3 (pedagogical support). Regarding criterion 14, even in those countries where quality assurance frameworks are in place for the general VET system, implementation challenges are likely linked to the general complexity of designing and implementing quality assurance specifically for apprenticeships, which are a distinct combination of training and work. Similarly the challenges on graduate tracking should be read in the context of the overall complexity of setting up systems to collect and analyse the indicators describing the employment and career progression of overall VET graduates. In the case of criterion 12, the situation is quite split: several Member States indicate significant progress while many countries did not progress at all. Concerning criterion 11, Member States and stakeholders did not differentiate their assessment on the two elements of flexible pathways and mobility, with some interesting exceptions. For instance, in Portugal the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the single national body responsible for the apprenticeship courses, will fund learners' international mobility in the 2021-2027 period. Italy indicated that they are working on raising awareness among companies in order to promote the opportunities for transnational mobility of apprentices offered by Erasmus+ Programme.

Even if progress since the adoption of the Council Recommendation may seem overall limited, the analysis focuses on a relatively short timeframe of two and a half years. In

addition, developments also took place for criteria that were already covered at the time of the adoption of the Council Recommendation. This suggests that the Framework is relevant for all Member States and allows them to continuously develop their apprenticeship systems. In this respect, the EFQEA criteria are not limited to establishing minimum standards on quality and effective apprenticeships, but they also stimulate continuous improvement in these relevant areas. For example, Malta already had compulsory written apprenticeship agreements before March 2018, and still updated the relevant legislation to better respond to apprentices' and employers' needs[16]. Similarly, several Member States (France, Hungary, Poland) reported improvements on the involvement of social partners, despite having relevant legislation in place prior to the adoption of the Council Recommendation. In this context, Greece recently reformed the apprenticeship system by allowing a stronger involvement of social partners, influenced by the Benchlearning[17] process.

5. Other aspects of EFQEA implementation at national level

In addition to the 14 quality criteria, the EFQEA Council Recommendation defines four additional points for implementation at national level:

- (15) Promote the active involvement of social partners in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes, in line with national industrial relations systems and education and training practices;
- (16) Ensure equal access, promote gender balance and tackle discrimination in apprenticeship schemes;
- (17) Include the relevant implementing measures in the National Reform Programmes under the European Semester;
- (18) Take into account this framework when making use of European Union funds and instruments supporting apprenticeships.

5.1. Involvement of social partners

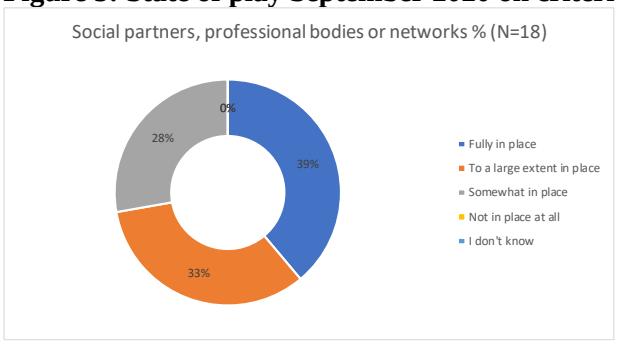
In addition to point 15 of EFQEA that calls for the involvement of social partners, criterion 9 of the Council Recommendation also states that 'Social partners, including, where relevant, at sectoral level and/or intermediary bodies, should be involved in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes, in line with national industrial relations systems and education and training practices'.

At European level, social partners are committed to the Framework to which they have provided an important input[18]. At a high level conference on quality apprenticeships, co-organised by the European Commission and the International Labour Organisation on 15-16 March 2021, ETUC, BusinessEurope and SME United expressed their support towards EFQEA and renewed their call for its full implementation. In particular BusinessEurope

[16] Malta is one of the four volunteer countries within the first cycle of the Benchlearning process, alongside Belgium (Flanders), Greece and Romania.
[17] See the section on Apprenticeship Support Services.
[18] Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships: May 2016 https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/apprenticeship_joint_statement_30may.pdf and ACVT Opinion on A Shared Vision for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning: December 2016 https://www.businesseurope.eu/sites/buseur/files/media/position_papers/social/final_version_acvt_opinion.pdf

praised the Benchlearning process as a useful support measure to Member States in pursuing national reforms. Looking at the involvement of social partners at national level, in September 2020, more than two-third of the Member States (70%) indicated having this criterion fully in place or demonstrated an advanced stage of system change. Another 22% indicated that it is not in place but that changes are visible.

Figure 5: State of play September 2020 on criterion 9



The survey of national social partners does not fully confirm the assessment by Member States (Figure 5) as only 39% of the respondents indicated that this criterion is fully in place and 33% that it is to a large extent in place. 28% indicate that it is only somewhat in place. This indicates that from the perspective of social partners there is still progress to be made in better involving them in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes.

Between March 2018 and September 2020, important developments took place in relation to improving social partner involvement. Seven Member States indicate this as one of the most noticeable developments in their country related to the EFQEA criteria.

Examples of developments in recent years can be found for instance in France and Hungary. In France, as a result of the 2018 reform, the professional branches are now responsible for the financing and governance of apprenticeships, meaning that the social partners are now involved in the certification policy for their sectors, in all stages: from creation to implementation and repeal or transformation of certification. In Hungary, with the 2019 putting in place of a regulatory framework on apprenticeships, the social partner involvement has been further strengthened through the VET Innovation Council (SZIT), acting as a forum between the government and relevant VET stakeholders in the VET system. Also in Poland, the 2019 vocational education reform legally guaranteed that vocational education was supported by employers, employers' organisations, economic self-governments or other economic organisations, associations or professional self-governments, sectoral competence councils and the Programme Council for competences.

5.2. Supporting gender equality in apprenticeships

Gender equality has become an even more important priority for the EU under the current European Commission. On 5 March 2020, the European Commission proposed a new Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025),[19] presenting specific policy objectives and actions to make progress by 2025 towards a Europe of equal opportunities. Furthermore, an EU Task Force on Equality is established, tasked among others, with integrating a gender perspective in all EU policies[20]. The Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[21] also promotes gender balance and calls for addressing gender stereotypes.

[19] See COM/2020/152 final: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152
[20] See https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/dalli_en
[21] (2020/C 417/01): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29

Several Member States have specific initiatives in place to strengthen gender equality and counter gender stereotypes in apprenticeships. For example, in Austria there are seven ongoing projects at federal state level focusing on the promotion of a female-friendly corporate culture in the training company, and through support for apprentices and trainers. In Belgium (nl), projects in preparation of the implementation of dual learning under ESF include actions on equal access and gender equality. In Belgium (fr) there is also a specific promotion campaign looking at training from a gender perspective and aiming to break down gender stereotypes. Similarly, the National Agency for Education in Sweden has developed a supervisor training programme focusing on the psychosocial work environment and counteracting gender-based stereotypes and discrimination that is free of charge and implemented both physically and digitally. In Portugal, the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) submitted a proposal in June 2020 aiming to build tools to combat sexual segregation in educational and vocational choices through deconstruction of gender stereotypes associated with different areas of study and respective professions. In Germany, the annual 'Boys Day' and 'Girls Day'[22] or 'Cliché-free',[23] which aim to change gender stereotypical choices among boys and girls in education, and to encourage more girls to choose VET.

Some countries have also developed initiatives to increase the number of female apprentices in certain sectors. For example, Spain created an alliance between Ministries to plan measures to promote women in STEM. As part of this, some regional initiatives are already being developed (e.g. Comunidad Valenciana). Ireland has launched initiatives to encourage women and girls to consider apprenticeship as a means of launching or developing their careers. For example, a Software Developer Associate Apprenticeship programme for women was launched in November 2019 and a bursary to employers has been made available to encourage employing more female apprentices in the craft sectors. As a result, registrations increased from 60 female apprentices in 2016 to 900 in 2020.

5.3 Implementing measures in national reform programmes

The European Semester has been an important driver for countries to develop measures regarding apprenticeships through Country Specific Recommendations (CSR). In response to these CSRs, several Member States have included specific measures in their National Reform Programmes (NRP) related to education and training, including apprenticeships.

Romania adopted specific reforms focusing on strengthening and further developing the dual initial VET system (2017). In other Member States, the development of apprenticeships was part of tackling wider skills, labour market and/or societal challenges, such as the COVID-19 crisis, skills mismatch, unemployment, or early leaving from education and training. For example, in Poland changes were made to the provisions of education law to improve the quality of vocational education and adopting an Integrated Skills Strategy (ISS - 2019). In France, the apprenticeship reform is part of the response to mitigating the social and employment consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, in particular by promoting skills development and active support for all job-seekers (2020).

[22] https://www.girls-day.de/; https://www.boys-day.de/

[23] https://www.bibb.de/de/78089.php

5.4 Using EU funds for apprenticeships

The Council Recommendation states that the European Commission would support the Member States to implement the EFQEA through relevant Union funding. Financial support for the development of apprenticeships in the EU over the past three years has been provided through several European Structural and Investment Funds (2014-2020), in particular: the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Erasmus+ programme has also been an important driver of supporting apprenticeships, as well as the Union programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME), the Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

Most EU Member States reported that these EU funds have been important to further develop apprenticeship schemes. The funds which were cited as part of the reporting are the ESF[24], the Structural Reform Support Programme[25] and the Erasmus+ programme[26].

Overall Member States have allocated EUR 7 billion from their ESF resources 2014-2020 for strengthening vocational education and training systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes. A number of countries have used the ESF for promoting dual VET and developing pilot projects (e.g. to provide apprenticeships, to improve material conditions of training, raise awareness, support companies, broaden partnership between VET institutions and companies, or implement specific EFQEA criteria). In the same period, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) has been one of the main EU financial resources to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes. Member States with high NEET rates have benefitted from the EUR 9 billion YEI resources to help young people not in employment, education or training reintegrate into the labour market, often through apprenticeships.

Several Member States reported using the ESF for the project "Support for the system of dual education" (2020-2023), which targets schools in dual system that receive financial support for training in foreign languages and design of training programmes, pedagogical support and involvement of social partners. The ESF has provided resources for training apprentices, apprentices' salaries, providing apprentices with social security, covering travel costs from VET institution to companies, etc. For example, in Croatia, it is currently implemented through the Operational Programme 'Promoting education for the related crafts based on the apprenticeship system – PHASE II', and in Romania, through the 'Professional Scholarship' project, implemented by the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development.

Further examples include Belgium (nl), where the ESF has supported policy reform in the area of dual learning. In the 2014-2020 period, the ESF financed several pilot projects for the development of new dual learning pathways in secondary education and more recently also in higher education[27]. In Spain, the ESF project 'Technical support to improve the quality of dual VET in the Spanish education system' aims to create expertise and support Spanish authorities to define and implement appropriate processes, methodologies and data collection strategies. In France, the 2014-2020 ESF operational programmes have provided support to the development and improvement of the quality of apprenticeship schemes under the

[24] Belgium (nl), Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain
[25] Belgium (nl)
[26] Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Sweden
[27] https://www.duaalleren.vlaanderen

investment priority 10.3. In Germany, the ESF has supported young people in taking up apprenticeships through various measures both at federal and regional level, including a programme to integrate asylum seekers and refugees through apprenticeships[28]. In Latvia the ESF has supported the increase of the number of students in qualified educational institutions following their participation in work-based learning or employer-led practical training and training placements.

The Erasmus+ programme also supports apprenticeships, including apprentice mobility. Before the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating impact it had on learners and staff mobility (in all education and training sectors), in 2019 5% of VET learners were benefitting from a mobility experience abroad financed by the Erasmus+ programme. Around 12% of these were apprentices. The Erasmus PRO initiative has contributed to boosting the long-duration mobility of VET learners. However, even if the financial resources made available in the Erasmus+ programme were very significant, the demand for long-duration mobility of VET learners was still relatively low.

6. Additional support for apprenticeships at EU level

6.1 Apprenticeship Support Services

The Apprenticeship Support Services were launched by the Commission in November 2018 with the aim to improve the quality of apprenticeships across the European Union and beyond and in particular to support EU Member States in the implementation of EFQEA[29].

The Services contribute to strengthening the European apprenticeship community and support the European Union Member States in improving their apprenticeship schemes through three pillars:

- Knowledge-sharing: The Knowledge-sharing pillar offers a dynamic and searchable catalogue of quality-checked tools, knowledge and information about apprenticeships. Under this pillar the Services also offer webinars, live discussions, online training modules and videos.
- Networking: Networking and support fosters mutual learning and capacity-building through online networking and events such as stakeholder meetings or learning seminars.
- Benchlearning: Member States are supported to improve the quality and efficiency of apprenticeships through the establishment of an excellency model, tools for self-assessment and targeted expert and peer support. 25 Member States were mobilised to take part in the Benchlearning process, with 4 volunteers and 11 observers being part of the first Benchlearning cycle.

The first phase of the Services ran from November 2018 until October 2020. During these first two years the Services allowed to largely increase the support of stakeholders active under the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Key deliverables in this period included 4 online training courses, 10 webinars and 5 live online expert discussions, a discussion forum

[28] https://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/esf-integrationsrichtlinie-bund.html
[29] The contract with a budget of 2 million Euros for 2 years was funded by ESF Technical Assistance.

on apprenticeships hosted on LinkedIn with over 2000 members, the organisation of 18 events/meetings both face-to-face and online. Volunteer countries of the first benchlearning cycle reported that the benchlearning process helped them in pursuing national apprenticeship reforms (e.g. Greece, Malta).

The Services have been extended for another 2 years, until October 2022 allowing to implement the Action Plan of the Renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA).

6.2. Awareness raising

The Commission continued promoting the excellence and attractiveness of vocational education and training and of apprenticeships, as well as a positive image among young people, their families and employers, through regular organization of the European Vocational Skills Week. Five editions of the Week were organised since 2016, with an ever growing number of participants. The last edition, organised online in November 2020, reached out to close to 4 million people attending associated events, with 3900 participants attending centrally organised events.

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) regularly organised its own events during the Skills Weeks, including in 2020 an online event on green and digital skills in apprenticeships. EAfA, while promoting the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships, as well as the mobility of apprentices, has been instrumental in mobilizing more than 1 million opportunities for young people since 2013. The Renewed EAfA, launched in July 2020, continues to bring together governments, social partners, businesses, chambers, regions, youth organizations, VET providers including teachers and trainers and think tanks. It calls for new commitments for digital and green apprenticeships, focusing on the economic sectors that will be on the frontline of the transition to a climate neutral Europe. Since July 2020 it attracted almost 40 new pledges[30], as well as Israel as the first new partner country outside EU, EFTA and candidate countries.

The renewed EAfA, embedded in the Pact for Skills, is an important pillar that supports the implementation of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. In particular it fosters national apprenticeship coalitions, incentivises support to SMEs, and mobilises local and regional authorities for apprenticeships. It also envisages strengthening social dialogue at national and at sectoral level, as well as the representation of apprentices through a relaunch of the European Apprentice Network.

The Commission is also promoting, within the context of the digital transformation of education and training, the use of self-reflection tools for improving the digital capacity of educational stakeholders. SELFIE[31] is a free online self-reflection tool to help schools embed digital technologies into teaching, learning and assessment.

6.3. Funding

Substantial European Funding was made available for apprenticeships between 2014 and 2020 through several European Structural and Investment Funds, as outlined in section 5.4.

[30] As of June 2021 a total of 1,035,226 apprenticeships and other work-based learning placements have been pledged under EAfA.
[31] https://schools-go-digital.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

With the adoption of NextGenerationEU and the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, as of 2021 the European Union offers significant support to Member States to develop and strengthen their education and training systems and foster skills development through funding opportunities such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility[32], the European Social Fund +, the European Regional Development Fund, the Erasmus+ programme, the InvestEU programme or the Technical Support instruments (TSI). Operations that can be supported include, among others, direct subsidies for apprentices in SMEs (including remuneration, recruitment bonuses and temporary social contributions coverage) and direct subsidies for trainers' wages and/or their social contributions.

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) with a budget of EUR 99.3 billion will continue to support apprenticeships in the 2021-2027 period. It is expected that approximately one-third of the available resources will be invested in education and skills, including apprenticeships. The budget of the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2021-2027 has been almost doubled when compared to the previous programming period. This significant increase in the budget will allow to finance almost 1.9 million VET learners and staff in mobility experiences and work-placements abroad. The actions are open to all types of VET learners including apprentices. The resources allow for a significant increase in the number of apprentices in mobility. However, this depends on the increase of demand from the organisations applying to Erasmus+. Both companies and VET providers need to make better use of the opportunities provided by Erasmus+. Erasmus PRO will continue to receive additional financial support and incentives, aimed at addressing the challenges in long-duration mobility in VET and apprenticeships.

The Commission provides technical support to Member States for the efficient use of these instruments and programmes, including the provision of guidance notes. Among others, the Commission proposed under the Recovery and Resilience Plans a dedicated component on up- and reskilling,[33] featuring among others an example on the development of a national apprenticeship programme in ICT. The Commission's Recommendation of March 2021 on 'Effective Active Support to Employment' ("EASE") offers Member States concrete policy guidance on how to move from maintaining jobs in the COVID-19 pandemic to creating new and sustainable jobs as part of the recovery, as well as on how to move from one existing job to another. EASE also supports strengthening support schemes for apprenticeships and paid traineeships, in particular in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and in sectors facing particular skill shortages.

7. Remaining challenges

As recalled in the introduction, since the adoption of the Framework, a number of important policy developments took place, such as the European Green Deal, the Youth Employment Support package, the Council Recommendation on VET and Osnabrück Declaration, just to name a few.

[32] As of June 2021 Germany and Greece included apprenticeships in their draft RRPs.
[33] https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/examples-component-reforms-and-investment-reskill-and-upskill_en

The COVID-19 pandemic affected apprenticeships due to the temporary suspension of classes during lockdown. As a whole, the COVID-19 crisis is expected to have long-term effects on apprenticeships, especially for the sectors most hardly hit by the crisis, for disadvantaged groups (such as people with migrant background), for those without access to online technologies and for those living in most deprived areas (urban and rural areas with less access to accompanying services and public infrastructure). Policy responses with regards to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on apprenticeships varied across countries. As a whole, countries established measures to adapt curricula to digital learning systems. Some countries adopted specific emergency legislative texts for the organisation of the school year. Moreover, financial support was made available to counteract the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in several Member States, e.g. through bonuses for SMEs to keep their apprentices or to recruit new apprentices.[34]

Looking ahead, the implementation of the Framework should as much as possible take into account these important developments and a number of outstanding policy challenges:

- The transition towards a more digital and greener economy will require VET including apprenticeships to adapt to ensure that young people acquire relevant skills through their apprenticeship programmes, as also referred to in the Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience[35] . The SELFIE Work-Based Learning module can help with this[36].
- Apprenticeships are normally conceived as a learning opportunity for young people, generally in the context of initial education and training (IVET), and are therefore often underdeveloped as a learning opportunity for adult learners. The challenge is to make apprenticeships accessible to all people at different stages of life, taking into account their specific needs and contexts (for instance, third-country nationals who are legally residing and working in EU countries without a proper accreditation of their previous qualifications).

- A renewed emphasis on effective professional development for teachers and trainers and increasing their cooperation will be crucial. To support them, the Commission launched in October 2020 an online Community of VET practitioners in EPALE[37]: teachers, trainers, and in-company tutors can network and exchange practices and ideas in this interactive space. Cedefop is currently conducting a feasibility study for a survey of vocational education and training (VET) teachers and trainers, aiming to serve the long-term EU strategy for green, digital, inclusive and fair economies. The European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) and the SELFIE for TEACHERS[38] tool can support action plans on teachers' continuing professional development focusing on their digital competence.

- Soft skills that are cross-cutting across jobs and sectors and relate to personal and social competences will become even more important on a labour market where workers may need to change jobs more often than today. Apprenticeships need to contribute to long-term employability through non-company-specific occupational skills and strong transversal competences, empowering apprentices to find jobs

[34] This was the case in Austria, Belgium (fr), Belgium (nl), Denmark, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.
[35] (2020/C 417/01): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29
[36] https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital/selfie_news/make-the-most-of-digital-technologies-with-the-selfie-tool-for-vet-schools-and-work-based-learning_en
[37] https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/practitioners-in-vet
[38] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/en/community/digcompedu-community/news/selfie-teachers-pilot-launched-today

beyond specific companies and sectors. The same time, there is a need to make better use of apprenticeships for adults as they can effectively support transitions from one job to another[39].

- Gender differences in apprenticeships remain high. Women are less likely to have a VET degree in most countries and men and women tend to specialise in different fields. Gender imbalances in particular fields or types of programmes can raise equity issues – e.g. in the construction sector the benefits yielded by apprenticeships go disproportionately to men[40].

- Another challenge relates to the mobility of apprentices. The Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training sets the goal of 8% of learners in VET to benefit from learning mobility abroad by 2025[41].

- Finally, in many Member States VET jobs and careers still lack attractiveness. More efforts are needed to make VET more attractive by innovating and modernising the sector, notably in terms of new learning environments, tools and pedagogies.

8. Conclusions

The adoption of the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA) was an important milestone in bringing closer the very diverse apprenticeship schemes across Europe and in defining commonly agreed requirements to ensure that both apprentices and employers can benefit from apprenticeships. This can contribute both to upward convergence of VET systems and can also facilitate apprentice mobility across borders.

Two and a half years after the adoption of the Framework the 7 criteria for learning and working conditions are in place in the majority of Member States. However, the specific features of different criteria (e.g. the type of written agreement) and the interlinkages among criteria (e.g. the impact of the written agreement on social protection and working conditions) can point to possible improvements on a case by case. For instance, social protection is largely covered in countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as employment contracts or specific types of contract subject to employment law; but in countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as other non-contractual types of formal agreement, apprentices tend not to benefit from social protection or employment protection legislation. While most Member States have indicated that apprentices are paid or otherwise compensated for the work based component, this does not give any indication regarding its level which can vary largely[42]. When the apprentice receives an 'allowance', this is often closer to a symbolic compensation or way to reimburse expenses[43]. Although the Council Recommendation suggests to undertake, where possible, a part of the workplace experience abroad (criterion 4) and to promote mobility either at the workplace or at the training institutions (criterion 11), there is

[39] See Cedefop's 2019 study on Apprenticeships for Adults: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4179_en.pdf
[40] In 2017 in the EU28, women represented only 13 % of learners in the field of engineering, manufacturing and construction, and 16 % in the field of information and communication technologies (Eurostat).
[41] Measured as the share of mobile learners in a calendar year, as a proportion of a cohort of VET graduates in the same year.
[42] The study 'The cost effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes' (Businesseurope, UEAPME, CEEP, 2016) shows a great variety of apprentice wages all over the EU: https://www.businesseurope.eu/publications/cost-effectiveness-apprenticeship-schemes-making-case-apprenticeships
[43] EFQEA Implementation: A Cedefop analysis and main findings; Cedefop, March 2021; https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4195_en.pdf

still room for further progress, especially in raising awareness about the available opportunities.

As for the 7 criteria on framework conditions further progress in implementation is needed. Although regulatory frameworks are mostly in place, Member States and relevant stakeholders are often facing difficulties in reaching a shared understanding of the apprenticeship function, purpose and value, the necessary means and tools, and therefore have problems in attracting employers and learners. The discrepancy between the evaluation of governments and social partner organisations clearly indicates that there is still progress to be made in better involving national social partners in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes. Although a recent survey on national coalitions for apprenticeships[44] shows important progress in relation to the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, additional efforts are also needed.

Progress between March 2018 and September 2020 may seem to be relatively limited, however this can be explained by the limited time window under consideration and the fact that several of the criteria were already implemented to some degree prior to the adoption of the Framework. More importantly, the Framework proved to help Member States in continuously developing their apprenticeship schemes including those criteria that were already covered at the time of the adoption of the Council Recommendation. Several Member States successfully used EU funding for the reform of their apprenticeship schemes. It is important that Member States continue investing in apprenticeships by using the 2021-27 EU budget and the Next Generation EU recovery fund.

As expressed by European social partners at the Commission-International Labour Organisation (ILO) High Level Conference on 'Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EU) and International Labour Standards on Apprenticeships ' in March 2021, the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships shall remain a key instrument to enhance the quality of apprenticeships in the EU. The Commission will continue to provide full support to Member States in its implementation[45]. This includes the prolongation of the Apprenticeship Support Services until October 2022 and the carrying forward the Benchlearning process, established in 2020.

In order to support Member States in the full implementation of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA), the Commission will also continue to roll out the Action Plan of the Renewed European Alliance for Apprenticeships, while carrying on the broader cooperation with Member States on the Skills Agenda and the VET Recommendation, EASE, and the reinforced Youth Guarantee. The Commission will continue its close cooperation with Member States to ensure that EU funding is fully exploited to secure relevant investments and reforms in these areas. In parallel, the Commission will continue cooperation with international organisations, in particular the ILO, to share the EFQEA as a model with the rest of the world, in particular in the context of the negotiations towards international standards on apprenticeships.

[44] The survey of March 2021 identified 30 national, regional or local apprenticeship coalitions across Europe.
[45] As for the Quality Framework for Traineeships, the Commission announced its revision for 2022 in its Communication of 4 March 2021 on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

Annex 1: Country fiches

Austria

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

There is no definition of 'apprenticeships' in Austria, but the legal framework does define apprenticeship-related key terms. 'Apprentices' are defined as persons who are professionally trained and – within the framework of this training – employed on the basis of an apprenticeship contract with the purpose of learning an occupation included in the list of apprenticeship occupations at authorised apprenticeship training entities. 'Authorised apprenticeship training entities' are physical and legal persons as well as open corporations and limited partnerships, in which apprentices are professionally trained and – within the framework of this training – employed. 'Apprenticeship occupations' are activities which show all elements of one or several occupations according to the regulations of the Commercial Code of 1994[46]; which are suitable to form the subject of an occupation in the economy; and which require at least two years of learning.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Austria are regulated by the Federal Act on the Vocational Training of Apprentices, valid from 1969[47]. The last amendment took place in March 2020 (BGBl. I Nr. 18/2020).

3. History of apprenticeships

The beginnings of company-based VET date back to the Middle Ages. During that period, trade associations ran so-called 'master craftsperson apprenticeships'. Towards the end of the 19th century, the public sector became involved in VET and the traditional craftsperson apprenticeship was complemented by school-based education programmes. In the period following World War I, major framework conditions were created for apprenticeship training which improved the protection of apprentices. After World War II, the range of provisions of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act (*Gewerbeordnung*, GewO) was bundled in the first draft of the Federal Act on the Vocational Training of Apprentices, which entered into force in 1969, and which is still valid today.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There are two apprenticeship schemes in Austria. The first one is the **'Dual Apprenticeship' scheme (*duale Ausbildung*)**, which has a long history and dates back to the medieval guild system. Figures from 2018-2019 show that about 36.5% of pupils are trained in a legally recognised apprenticeship occupation after nine years of schooling. A further 39.3% opt for a school-based VET programme. This means that around 76.5% of all Austrian pupils follow a VET programme. In 2018, 99,613 pupils were enrolled in this scheme; in 2019, this was 101,689. Apprentices in this scheme have the double legal status of learner and employee.

The second apprenticeship scheme is the **'Inter-Company Training' scheme *(Überbetriebliche Ausbildung – ÜBA)***, which primarily aims to tackle youth unemployment. Through this scheme, young people who have completed compulsory schooling but cannot find suitable employment and are registered with the public employment service, are offered an apprenticeship placement with a company and the opportunity to take a recognised apprenticeship exam. This programme is funded by the Austrian public employment service (PES). In 2018, 8,302 learners were enrolled in this scheme; in 2019, this was 7,422. Apprentices in this scheme also have the double legal status of learner and employee.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main development in Austria since March 2018 is the **Amendment of the Vocational Training Act**, which took place in March 2020. This amendment introduced the following main changes: the possibility for apprentices to shorten the weekly workplace learning requirements in certain cases (e.g. childcare duties, health

[46] Bundesrecht konsolidiert: Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift für Gewerbeordnung 1994, Fassung vom 10.11.2020: https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10007517

[47] Federal Act on the Vocational Training of Apprentices (Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz - BAG, BGBl. Nr. 142/1969*) of 26 March 1969 (version of 21.03.2020, BGBl. I Nr. 18/2020). Based on: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/austria

reasons); the option for apprentices to follow inter-company training; a systematic analysis of apprenticeships in Austria every five years; and the possibility for apprentices to take their final apprenticeship examination as part of a higher qualification in another federal state, in case this option is not offered in the state in which they are based. This makes it easier to catch up with an apprenticeship qualification in adulthood ("*Du kannst was*" approach [EN:"*You can do something"*]).

6. Overarching assessment

Given the long tradition of apprenticeships in Austria, the EFQEA criteria were already mostly in place in March 2018. This, however, does not mean that no developments took place in recent years.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	No action taken

A noticeable development concerns the **modernisation of training regulations** and the implementation of a new competence-oriented model for designing professional profiles, job descriptions and examination regulations. Another key development relates to flexible pathways and CVET, namely the introduction of **Higher Vocational Education**, quality-assured practical vocational qualifications from level 5 of the national (and thus European) qualifications framework, which build on qualifications from the secondary level, in particular on apprenticeship qualifications, and impart job-relevant skills. The stakeholder consultation process will be started together with the Ministry of Education in autumn 2020. Furthermore, a special activity within the CVET activities is the country-wide implementation of the so called **'Dual Academy'**, i.e. a bridge-qualification in the area of vocational (dual) education between NQF level 4 (e.g. apprenticeship final exam) and NQF level 6 (master craftsman's examination or engineer-qualification).

Belgium (Flanders)

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Article 4 of the 'Decree on the system of learning and working in Flanders' defines apprenticeships as a system combining learning and working for young people which is at least 28 hours per week. The 'Codification of Secondary Education' defines dual learning as an educational scheme where training is divided in a balanced way between a company and a provider of dual learning (i.e. a school), i.e.: at least 28 hours of training per week and a minimum of 14 hours dedicated to workplace learning.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

There are three major decrees forming the basis of apprenticeships in Flanders:

- Decree on the system of learning and working in Flanders of 2008 (Decreet betreffende het stelsel van leren en werken in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap – decreet leren en werken);[48]
- Decree on the regulation of several aspects of alternating courses of 2016 (Decreet tot regeling van bepaalde aspecten van alternerende opleidingen – decreet OAO);[49]
- Codification of Secondary Education of 2018 (*Codex Secundair Onderwijs*).[50]

3. History of apprenticeships

The earliest apprenticeship system (*leertijd*) dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. An important event was the legislation from 1983, [51] which raised the age of compulsory education to 18 years old in Belgium and introduced a system of part-time education. This allowed learners to combine going to school for one or two days per week with working in a company. In 2008, a reform took place to integrate all apprenticeship systems into one system, i.e. the system of learning and working. Based on a 2015 evaluation of the system of learning and working,[52] the Flemish Government started a reform of the system of learning and working towards dual learning. In 2019, the legislation of dual learning was implemented in secondary education.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Flanders, apprenticeships are organised under two different schemes. The first scheme is the **system of learning and working**, with an additional subdivision of schemes, based on the type of training provider. [53] On the one hand there is part-time vocational secondary education (*deeltijds beroepssecundair onderwijs, dbso*): this scheme combines two school days with three working days per week. The working days can be spent in a company, but also in projects offered by public training services.[54] On the other hand, there is the apprenticeship (*leertijd*): in this scheme, learners combine one school day with four working days. Originally, this scheme was intended to employees of SMEs, however, from 2008 onwards, this broadened to other learners as well.

The second scheme is the **system of dual learning**,[55] which combines school-based and work-based learning and leads to the same upper secondary level qualification as the regular school-based VET programmes. The system was first introduced on the 1st September 2019 and attracted 1,500 students in 2019/2020.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main developments in Flanders are related to the adoption, in March 2018, of the **Decree on Dual Learning**.[56] This decree provides a legislative framework for the organisation of apprenticeships within regular

[48] http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14032
[49] https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14994
[50] https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=15247
[51] https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=12344
[52] https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/onderwijsonderzoek/?nr=183
[53] In the past, there was a third party involved in the system of learning and working; the centres for parttime training. These centres were involved in the organisation of the personal development pathways for learners that had a specific need due to personal, social or motivational problems. These centres were given a different function from the 1st of September 2019 onwards.
[54] It sould be noted that, despite its name, this is a full-time programme. The expression "part-time" must be understood as a *distinction* from the school-based and full-time vocational education (bso) in which learners are then trained in a certain occupation through internships and school-based learning.
[55] https://www.duaalleren.vlaanderen

fulltime secondary education, and it also makes it possible to organise these new dual courses in centres for part-time vocational education and Syntra vzw. In time, this scheme intends to replace the system of learning and working. The decree also provided a reform of the existing pre-apprenticeships within the system of learning and working, extending its scope to dual learning. These pre-apprenticeships target students who show a strong willingness to learn at the workplace, but who are not able to do so due to a lack of (occupational) skills. These pre-apprenticeships aim to provide these students with the skills and competences they need to start a dual course. In the near future, **dual learning will be rolled out to adult education and higher education** (i.e. from September 1st, 2022). At the moment, ESF-funded pilot projects are ongoing to test dual learning in adult education and higher education (2019-2022).

6. Overarching assessment

The assessment below relates to the system of dual learning. Already in March 2018, more than half of all EFQEA criteria were fully in place, and six were in place to a large extent.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

The main developments under the dual learning scheme are firstly **the development of a single contract (criterion 1: written contract),** improving the transparency for both companies and students. A **standard curriculum (*standaardtraject*) (criterion 2: learning outcomes)** was also developed, clearly laying out the learning outcomes of dual courses and reflecting the needs of both the sectoral and educational stakeholders in a balanced way. There is now also a **legal obligation for in-company trainers to follow a course on how to tutor learners (criterion 3: learning outcomes)**. Although there are no specifications on the content nor the duration of the course, companies can benefit from reduced social contributions to encourage employers to send their employees on training courses. There are no specific measures, however, to support teachers, trainers or mentors in SMEs.

Some challenges are firstly that, at the moment, apprenticeship mobility remains limited in Flanders due to strict quality requirements which companies need to meet. A **more standardised approval system for apprenticeship mobility (criterion 11: flexible pathways and mobility)** could improve this situation. Despite a large-scale campaign on the new system of dual learning in the spring of 2019 (including radio commercials, a

[56] https://codex.vlaanderen.be/PrintDocument.ashx?id=1029305&datum=&geannoteerd=false&print=false

website, flyers and banners adapted to individual schools), **more work needs to be done to inform learners about the opportunities available under dual learning (criterion 13: transparency)**, and to improve the general image of dual learning as a study option. Finally, although there is some data collection and monitoring in place, there are **no clear policy indicators on whether dual learning is 'successful' of not (criterion 14: quality assurance and graduate tracking)**. There is still room for improvement in setting long-term goals and targets.

Belgium (French Community)

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Belgium (French Community) are part of *"formation en alternance"* (dual training). An apprentice is any person who is enrolled in dual training and tied to an employer by a contract. As of 1 July 2015, dual training is defined by six conditions: (1) training is carried out both in the workplace and in an education or training institution; (2) training leads to a vocational qualification; (3) the work-based component should, on average on an annual basis, consists of 20 hours per week; (4) the school-based component should provide at least 240 hours of training per year for young people in compulsory part-time education (aged 15-18 years old), and at least 150 hours of training for young people who are no longer of compulsory schooling age; (5) the training conducted at the workplace and in the training centre are covered by a contract between the employer and the learner; and (6) learners receive remuneration, which is paid for by the employer.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in the French Community of Belgium are regulated by:

- A framework cooperation agreement on *"formation en alternance"*, established on 24 October 2008 and implemented in 2015/2016;[57]
- The decrees of 15, 16 and 17 of July 2015 on the alternance contract and training plan;[58]
- The decree of 3 July 1991, which regulates vocational education provided by the educational authorities (CEFA – *Centres d'Education et de Formation en Alternance*);[59]
- The decree of 17 July 2003,[60] which regulates vocational training provided IFAPME in Wallonia (*Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises*) and SFPME in Brussels (*Centre de formation de métiers en alternance*).

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships schemes can be organised by either apprenticeship centers in schools (CEFA) or by the training organisations of SMEs (IFAPME, SFPME). The CEFA scheme was originally introduced as part of compulsory schooling in 1985 at the time of extending the compulsory schooling age from 15 to 18, with the implicit purpose of providing education to all young people who were at risk of early school leaving. SME training on apprenticeships has a long tradition and targets the skills needs of the SME labour market. In 1907, the first apprenticeship secretariat in Wallonia was created. The IFAPME network can be considered as the heir of this first historic institution.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In the French Community of Belgium there is one apprenticeship scheme, i.e. **dual training (*formation en alternance*)**.[61] As described above, dual training can be offered by either apprenticeship centres in schools (CEFA) or training organisations in SMEs (IFAPME, SFPME) – the latter are independent structures from the educational authorities.[62] The scheme is offered at upper secondary level and targets learners from 15 to 25 years old – in particular learners who are at risk of early school leaving or who accumulated 'school failure' (the majority are older than 18). In 2016/2017 11511 learners were enrolled in dual training.

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[57] https://wallex.wallonie.be/contents/acts/6/6983.html

[58] http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=fr&la=F&cn=2015071506&table_name=loi ; https://www.etaamb.be/fr/arrete-du-gouvernement-wallon-du-16-juillet-2015_n2015203805.html (Walloon government); and https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/41760_001.pdf (French Community).

[59] http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23820

[60] https://wallex.wallonie.be/contents/acts/10/10054/1.html?doc=4042

[61] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches/dual-training

[62] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/be-fr

5. Main developments since March 2018

Most of the work done in the French Community of Belgium related to apprenticeships since 2014 has been to **finalise the implementation of the framework cooperation agreement from 2008**. Some major developments which took place since then include: assessment of apprentices' prior skills before entering apprenticeships (since 2019); the implementation of an interactive platform collecting information on companies' accreditation, training contracts and incentives; the establishment of an accreditation and mediation commission, including social partner representatives; and the launch of Alt+, a new brand by OFFA aimed at harmonising the communication of all training operators and schemes under the same name and image.

6. Overarching assessment

1.0 With the exception of criteria 13 and 14 most EFQEA criteria were already fully in place in March 208 in the French Community of Belgium.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action take
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

The main areas on which developments took place since March 2018 are criterion 1 (written contract / agreement), criterion 12 (career guidance and awareness raising) criterion 11 (flexible pathways and mobility) and criterion 14 (quality assurance and graduate tracking). OFFA (*Office Franncophone de la Formation en Alternance* – Francophone office for Alternance Training) has produced a series of tools and references to give providers and users (i.e. companies and apprentices) **quick and easy answers on the regulatory framework** (e.g. VADE MECUM, FAQ, website, hotline, etc.). As part of the reform, all apprenticeship providers now conduct a **skills assessment at the start of the apprenticeship**, in order to confirm the candidate's choice of apprenticeship and identify career guidance and remediation needs. OFFA has also been **compiling statistics on the evolution of apprenticeships** in French-speaking Belgium to produce an annual scoreboard including information on various indicators (such as the employment inclusion rates of apprentices).

Areas where implementation challenges persist are criterion 11 (flexible pathways and mobility) and criterion 7 (transparency). Due to the **complexity of the apprenticeship system** in French-speaking Belgium (i.e. the existence of two apprenticeship training systems – one in Wallonia, one in Brussels – and three education networks), it is not easy for learners to transition from one operator to another. As a result of this complexity,

there is **not enough clarity and transparent information for young people, parents and companies** on the different options available. All of these are areas which French-speaking Belgium will work to improve over the coming years.

Bulgaria

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Bulgaria are covered by the dual training system. The conditions and procedures for this system are regulated by the Vocational Education and Training Act (VET)[63] The dual training system consists of a partnership between a VET system institution (e.g. a vocational secondary school, vocational college or vocational training centre) and one or more employers. Together, they cover the work-based component of practical training in a real working environment, and the school-based component of studying in a vocational education and training system institution. The system applies both to persons aged 16 and over who are a part of the educational system (students in the 11th and 12th grades) and to persons aged 16 and over who are no longer in school and already have jobs.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

The legal framework for work-based learning can be found in the Labour Code (amended in 2014 and 2018)[64], the Vocational Education and Training Act, and the State Gazette of 1999[65]. The 2014 VET Act covers both upper-secondary and post-secondary dual training.

The changes in the Employment Promotion Act (EPA), adopted at the end of 2015, introduced incentives for employers (art. 46a) to hire unemployed persons for work-based learning under the dual training system.

3. History of apprenticeships

The history of apprenticeship in Bulgaria is quite recent. Schools and companies have started offering dual vocational training after the amendments to the VET Act in 2014. Furthermore, under the amended VET Act, the dual training system is a specific form of VET based on a partnership (including a contract) between one or more employers and a VET institution. 'Domino' pilot project (2015-2019) was launched with the aim of introducing dual training in Bulgaria based on the Swiss model. At the beginning of 2020, the project 'Support of dual system of training' started under the ESF/ERDF Operational Programme 'Science and Education for Smart Growth'. The activities of this project target schools, in-company trainers and teachers in the dual training system and focus on trades protected by the state and sectors with labour market shortages.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Bulgaria has one apprenticeship scheme: the **dual training system (*Обучение чрез работа*).** In 2014, dual education was introduced in the legislation. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for organising dual training in vocational schools. The duration of the VET programme is 5 years. However, students spent time in the workplace only in the last 2 years of their programme. The type of labour contract (apprenticeships) is specific for the scheme. At the workplace, the student is an employee with a specific status as he/she works under the supervision of an instructor. As such, apprentices are subject to the same rights and obligations as other employees. At school, the student has a normal student status. The apprentices also receive a salary. The number of learners in dual system of education for the school year 2019/2020 was 6,339.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main legislative changes concerning apprenticeships relate to the implementation of the amendments to the VET Act. These include new requirements for employers and instructors to ensure quality in the dual system of education and a clear definition of the functions for teachers and in-company trainers. A regular update of school curricula was also introduced to respond to the labour market changes and an information system was developed for employers in the dual system.

6. Overarching assessment

Most EFQEA criteria for learning and working conditions were already in place in Bulgaria in 2018. No further progress or actions were therefore registered on the majority of these criteria. Some initial developments have taken place regarding the criteria for framework conditions. However, none of the changes are visible throughout the system/scheme.

[63] VET Act: https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/ZAKON-ZA-PROFESIONALNOTO-OBRAZOVANIE-I-OBUChENIE_35.pdf
[64] Labour Code: https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/1594373121
[65] No. 68/30.07

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

It was noted that the amendments to the VET Act from October 2018 and the regulations of the Labour Code led to progress being made on **Criterion 1: Written contract/agreement**, with company training being provided to students based on a written contract signed between the company and the apprentice. All regulations in the Labour Code for employment contracts are applicable to students in the dual system. Moreover, the Ministerial Council Decree of 2019[66] guarantees the sustainability of dual training by allocating state budget support to apprentices in lower secondary education. The **pay and/or compensation (criterion 5)** of apprentices is also guaranteed by the latest amendments to the Pre-School and School Education Act[67].

Bulgaria still faces some implementation challenges when it comes to ensuring **flexible pathways and mobility (criterion 11)** as well as **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)**. There is still no credit transfer system in place in Bulgaria from secondary VET to higher education which can provide for more individualised training paths, nor has a graduate tracking system been fully established yet (a pilot graduate tracking system is currently being rolled out in three regions). Finally, a fully-fledged **career guidance system (criterion 12)** is also needed in order to improve the low levels of awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships.

[66] Decree of Council of Ministers No. 644 of 2019 for amendment of Decision of Council of Ministers No. 208 of 2019 for adopting standards for government-delegated activities with natural and value indicators in 2020

[67] Preschool and School Education Act: https://www.mon.bg/?h=downloadFile&fileId=8245

Croatia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships aim to teach students skills as defined by the learning outcomes included in the vocational curriculum, foster students' independence and collaborative relationships and allow them to gain relevant work experience in a particular profession.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Croatia are regulated by three main acts. The first is the Act on VET,[68] which regulates the VET system and stipulates that apprenticeships are regulated by the Act on Crafts.[69] Apprenticeships in Croatia are also regulated by the Act on Primary and Secondary Education,[70] which regulates general secondary education, as well as the following regulations: Regulation on the procedure and method of issuing permits (licenses) and the conditions for the practical part of the apprenticeship;[71] Regulation on the minimum conditions for apprenticeship contracts;[72] Rules of Procedure and Manner of Taking a Journeyman's Exam;[73] and Regulation on the manner of organizing and conducting classes in vocational schools.[74]

3. History of apprenticeships

In the school year 2004/05, Croatia introduced the Unified Model of Education (UME), which is an apprenticeship scheme including 61 craft occupations. This scheme replaced the first apprenticeship scheme programmes in the dual system of education which had been in place since 1995/96 and were deemed too complex.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There are three apprenticeship models in Croatia, which each have a different share of work-based learning. In the **Unified Model of Education (UME)**, the responsibility is divided between the Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts. Students enrolled in this scheme have the right to receive a monthly allowance which is exempt from social contributions for pension and healthcare. In the 2019/2020 school year, 10,683 students were enrolled in this scheme. There are also **school-based VET curricula**, where a higher share of work-based learning is carried out in a VET school. Students in this model are entitled to a monthly fee which is exempt from social contributions for pension and healthcare. In the school year 2020/21, 17,090 students were enrolled in this scheme. Finally, in the school year 2018/19, Croatia also introduced a **model of dual education**.

5. Main developments since March 2018

A first main development in Croatia is the **amendment of the Crafts Act** to align the UME with the Governmental Programme 2016-2020.[75] In 2019/20, the ESF-financed "Promoting education for the related crafts based on the apprenticeship system–PHASE II" project provided over 4,100 scholarships and over 425 grants to companies (crafts and legal entities). As a result, there was a slight increase in the number of UME students (1%).[76] Also, in line with the Governmental Programme and the Programme for the Development of the VET System 2016-2020, the Act on VET was amended in 2018 and the National Curriculum for VET was adopted to strengthen work-based learning. Finally, in 2018/19, the **experimental dual education programme** was launched in cooperation with the chambers of economy and crafts, the associations of employers and partner institutions from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Since 2020/21, dual education is offered for nine

[68] Official Gazette 30/2009, 24/2010, 22/2013, 25/2018
[69] Official Gazette 143/2013, 127/2019, 41/2020
[70] Official Gazette 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, 105/2010, 90/2011, 16/2012, 86/2012, 94/2013, 152/2014, 7/2017, 68/2018, 98/2019, 64/2020
[71] Official Gazette 37/2015
[72] Official Gazette 63/2014, 80/2018
[73] Official Gazette 63/2014, 86/2015
[74] Official Gazette 130/2020
[75] This is the main framework on education, science and sports. It defines that educational system should be aligned with the needs of the labour market and anticipates the introduction of the model of dual vocational education wherein the employers become partners with educational institutions and decide together about the programme and the enrolment quota. https://www.booking.com/hotel/be/sassor-village.en-gb.html?aid=964694;label=postbooking_confemail;dist=0&keep_landing=1&sb_price_type=total&type=total&
[76] https://gospodarstvo.gov.hr/uprava-za-poduzetnistvo-i-obrt-11197/11197

qualifications in three-year and four-year programmes for 863 enrolled students. Students are entitled to a monthly fee which is exempt from social contributions for pension and healthcare.

6. Overarching assessment

In 2018, only three criteria were fully in place and five criteria were to a large extent in place. The criteria fully in place were criterion 1: written contract/agreement; criterion 5: pay and/or compensation; and criterion 10: support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements).

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)

Noticeable developments within the Croatian apprenticeship systems concern the development of **criterion 8: regulatory framework, criterion 10: support for companies and criterion 12: career guidance and awareness raising**. Under criterion 8, amendments to the Crafts Act enable further development of the UME especially in terms of quality assurance in apprenticeship and training of in-company mentors. Related to criterion 10, there are many opportunities for companies providing apprenticeships, including grants and tax reliefs. Career guidance and awareness raising activities have been especially prominent with a national campaign on UME occupations named “Hands”, broadcasted on national TV channels, radio, social networks and student scholarships co-funded by the ESF.

Contrary, more efforts are needed in the field of **criterion 3: pedagogical support, criterion 11: flexible pathways and mobility and criterion 14: quality assurance and graduate tracking.** Under criterion 3,

mechanisms for cooperation and exchange between in-company trainers and teachers (e.g. in schools) are very poor. The validation of apprentices' prior learning (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal) is not in place. There are no corresponding pathways offering a route between preparatory/pre-apprenticeship programmes and full apprenticeships, making criterion 11 still challenging. Related to criterion 14, public authorities do not monitor nor produce data on the transition rate

Cyprus

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Cyprus, an apprenticeship is understood as a school-based dual system leading to formal qualifications (at NQF/EQF level 3), with alternating periods of learning in school (2 days per week) and at the workplace (3 days per week).[77]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

The legal basis for apprenticeships stems back to the Law 13/1966 on Apprentices. Although the 1966 Law is still the valid legal basis for apprenticeships in Cyprus today, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MoECSY) aims to develop a new legal framework to reflect recent reforms related to the Apprenticeship Scheme.[78] A committee has been appointed within MoECSY and external legal advice has been requested, and approval for the revision is expected over the course of 2021.

3. History of apprenticeships

After being introduced in 1963, the apprenticeship scheme was reformed in 2012 and renamed into the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. In 2015, the MoECSY took overall responsibility for the NMA with a mandate to improve its quality and relevance to labour market needs. The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training (STVET) implemented a series of educational reforms and in 2018 renamed the NMA into Apprenticeship Scheme of Vocational Education and Training (ASVET).

4. Apprenticeship schemes

2.0 In Cyprus, there is one apprenticeship scheme: the **Apprenticeship Scheme of Vocational Education and Training (ASVET,** *Σύστημα Μαθητείας Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης*).[79] The MoECSY coordinates the core apprenticeship scheme through the STVET Department. At national level, the Apprenticeship Board (*Συμβούλιο Μαθητείας*) supports the MoECSY in designing and implementing the NMA. There are two types of apprenticeships embedded in the NMA, the Preparatory Apprenticeship and the Core Apprenticeship. For what concerns the status of the apprentice, they are a learner and the contractual arrangement is signed between the learner, their parent or guardian, and the employer (as required by the 1966 legislation). The education levels targeted by this scheme are compulsory lower secondary level (9th grade) for preparatory apprenticeships (1-2 years in length) and lower secondary level (10th grade) for core apprenticeships (3 years in length).[80] In the school year 2019-2020, 144 students were enrolled in core apprenticeships and 60 students were enrolled in preparatory apprenticeships.

5. Main developments since March 2018

Since March 2018, a number of developments concerning apprenticeships took place in Cyprus. Firstly, the **NMA has become accessible to young people from all districts** (more specifically the district of Paphos). Another important development is the **extension of the range of specialisations available to apprentices in Cyprus**. Forty extra specialisations were created for apprentices undertaking a Core Apprenticeship, focusing on innovative sectors and the needs of the local and European labour market. The **number of apprenticeship places was also increased**, in particular through collaborating on an Erasmus+ project between 2016 and 2018, with partners in Cyprus, Poland and the UK. Developments also took place to **improve the attractiveness of apprenticeships.** In August 2020, the MoECSY and STVET launched an advertisement project aimed at raising awareness and improving the image of the TVET, which will run until September 2023. **Upcoming reforms** include the reform and upgrading of the element of industrial placement and training in the curricula of initial

[77] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/cyprus

[78] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/cyprus

[79] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches/new-modern-apprenticeship

[80] http://www.cyqf.gov.cy/index.php/en/diagram

VET (work-based learning) and the Reform and upgrading of the element of industrial placement and training in the curricula of initial VET (work-based learning).

6. Overarching assessment

3.0 The table below demonstrates that most of the EFQEA criteria were either already fully in place or to a large extent in place in March 2018. Only two criteria (i.e. criteria 10 and 13) were highlighted as not being in place at all.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Not in place at all	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Not in place at all	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

Two criteria on which most progress has been made in Cyprus include criteria 2 and 9. For what concerns **criterion 2 (learning outcomes),** Core Apprenticeship curricula are in the process of being updated and graduates now have access to the evening schools of Technical and Vocational Education where they can progress from EQF 3 to EQF 4 in two years instead of three. There also have been developments on **criterion 9 (involvement of social partners)**: representatives of social partners and intermediary bodies participate in the national Apprenticeship Board (AB); the MoECSY has been involved in various projects (Erasmus+) with the regional Chambers of Commerce as well as the Cyprus Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Shopkeepers; in 2020 the MoECSY in collaboration with the Industry and the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation organised a talk at one of the meetings of the AB regarding the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs); and finally the idea of an Apprenticeship Award is being discussed with the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry to be incorporated in their annual Business Awards.

Areas that still need further work concern criteria 8, 10, and 13. Concerning **criterion 8 (regulatory framework),** the Apprenticeship Legislation is under review with the possibility of a shift of legal responsibility from the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance to the MoECSY. For what regards **criterion 10 (stupport for companies)**, non-financial incentives, including regulatory measures that encourage employers to take on apprentices, have been suggested and are being discussed at the Apprenticeship Board meetings. Finally, concerning **criterion 13 (transparency)**, the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and

Training is considering the possibility of adding a job-portal on the existing website ‘www.apphelp4smes.cy’, but at the moment this is still at early stages of development. Two new specific websites will also be developed: one for the Preparatory Apprenticeship, and another one for the Core Apprenticeship.

Czechia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

There is no official definition of apprenticeships in the Czech vocational education and training (VET) system, nor is the concept defined in any legislative acts. The Czech VET system is organised into three broad school-based VET programmes, which are part of the secondary and post-secondary educational system. However, none of these programmes oblige schools to provide students with work-based learning in a company. The closest VET programmes to apprenticeships are the ISCED 353, EQF 3 VET programmes, because they are required to provide both practical and theoretical education under the Education Act (561/2004 Coll)[81] either directly at school (such as school workshop or lab practices) or in a company. More specifically, schools delivering these programmes prepare their own educational curricula (called School Educational Programmes), but are required to follow national regulation on curricula in each vocational field (called Framework Educational Programmes, published by the Ministry of Education).

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships are not embedded in national legislation in the Czechia. However, most of the EFQEA criteria are covered by the provisions of the Education Act (No. 561/2004), the Labour Code[82] and other regulations on occupational safety and health and work.

3. History of apprenticeships

There are no apprenticeship schemes in Czechia.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There are no apprenticeship schemes in Czechia. The Czech system is organised into three school-based VET programmes part of secondary and post-secondary education. However, it is not mandatory for schools to provide practical education in the workplace.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main reform implemented was the **financial reform of regional austerity concerning kindergartens, primary and secondary schools**[83] implemented in 2018, established by regions and municipalities. The Government stipulates the maximum number of teaching hours financed by the state budget per class in the field of education for primary and secondary schools. This subsequently impacts the three-year secondary education (ISCED 353, EQF 3) and four-year secondary education with a vocational component (ISCED 354 , EQF 4).

6. Overarching assessment

Even though there are no apprenticeship schemes as such in Czechia, the Ministry does try seek to meet the EFQEA criteria for the workplace-based component of VET, which in many cases is carried out in the school workplaces, but also in companies. In March 2018, the majority of the EFQEA criteria were already fully in place, and they were mostly covered by the provisions of the Education Act (No. 561/2004), the Labour Code and other regulations on occupational safety and health and work, which also cover are the ISCED 353, EQF 3 VET programme.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

[81] https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/71366/95259/F2036466103/CZE71366.pdf
[82] https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/1152/file/57e59b5f06d4e5d2827e57b900e1772e.pdf
[83] https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2017-101/zneni-20180901

Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

Where developments have taken place since 2018, these have been driven by discussions between relevant ministries, representatives of employers, territorial bodies, social partners and trade union bodies, cooperation between schools, companies and relevant partners, as well as using the experience from ESF projects.

While apprenticeships are not embedded in Czech national legislation, initial progress has been made in relation to **pedagogical support (criterion 3)** with the introduction of so-called coordinators of cooperation between schools and companies, by using the experience from ESF projects as part of professional counselling for pupils and introducing training of professional pedagogical staff in companies. Interesting developments also took place in relation to the **involvement of social partners (criterion 9)**, with the cooperation between central administrative bodies, relevant ministries and social partners being set up, as well as the cooperation between schools, companies and partners leading to the elaboration of school education programmes.

Although several other criteria were marked as having registered significant progress, the country's self-assessment is based on the provisions of the Education Act (561/2004) and the Labour Code, which date back to 2004.

Czechia is experiencing implementation challenges around **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)**, taking into account the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). Monitoring the employment and career progression of apprentices is very complex and, according to the relevant regulations, falls outside the scope of education law, which places significant challenges to the implementation of this criterion. Moreover, no specific **support (or cost-sharing arrangements) for small and medium-sized enterprises (criterion 10)** are currently being provided. However,

the Ministry of Industry and Trade is preparing a document that will include such support in the field of apprenticeship training.

Denmark

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Article 2 of the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Denmark defines VET as alternance-based, consisting of periods of learning at school and training in enterprises. Details about the curriculum, duration, remuneration etc. are decided for each programme by the social partners in the so called trade committees.[84]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

4.0 Apprenticeships in Denmark are regulated by the "Vocational Training Act" (*Lov om erhvervsuddannelser*) which sets out the framework of VET, including the overall goals, admission rules and structure.

3. History of apprenticeships

5.0 The apprenticeship system in Denmark has roots dating back to the guilds in medieval times and has always been the dominant form of VET. The apprenticeship system has been the subject of reforms in recent years to regulate issues such as access and quality, but it has retained its fundamental characteristics.[85]

4. Apprenticeship schemes

6.0 Denmark has one apprenticeship scheme, **'apprenticeship' (*Lærlingeuddannelser*)**,[86] which is the dominant form of VET. The main target group are 16-17 year-olds, but many enrol at a later age. A distinction is made between mainstream and adult VET, but all programmes are organised as apprenticeships. The apprentice is an employee of the enterprise but has a special status as a learner. The enterprise is obliged to provide training so that the apprentice can reach the learning objectives that have been formulated by the relevant Trade Committee for the placement periods (*praktikmål*). The VET qualifications are generally at level 4 of the NQF. In 2017, 114,682 learners participated in school and work-based vocational programmes. In 2018, the total number was 104,602; in 2019, 108,827; and in 2020, this figure was 110,041.

5. Main developments since March 2018

On 22 November 2018, parties in the Danish Parliament concluded an **agreement to increase the attractiveness of VET** ("From primary education to skilled worker – vocational educations for the future" / "*Fra Folkeskole til faglært – erhvervsuddannelser til fremtiden*"). The objective is to attract more students through restructuring its management and making it less bureaucratic. A funding of 2.3 billion DKK (300 MEuro) was secured, meaning that VET will have the same financial framework in 2019 as in 2018. The reform is in its implementation phase, so it is too early to conclude any results on its implementation or effictivness yet. However, as shown above, a small increase in the intake of apprentices can be detected from 2018 to 2019.

In November 2020, a tripartite agreement[87] between the government and the social partners was made which will make it easier for students in VET to get an apprenticeship. The agreement means that DKK 500 million (67 MEuro) will be set aside annually from 2021 for, among other things, new apprenticeship support initiatives.

Today, the responsibility for finding an apprenticeship lies predominantly with the students. A central part of the agreement is a new division of responsibilities, in which the vocational schools must take on a much greater responsibility for finding apprenticeships for students not able to find an apprenticeship. The social partners are obliged to assist via the professional committees at the individual programs. DKK 141 million (19 MEuro) is set aside in 2021 and 139 million (18.6 MEuro) annually from 2022 onwards to the apprenticeship support work. Furthermore, funds will be set aside for greater flexibility, for instance some educations may have more school weeks than today.

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[84] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/denmark

[85] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/denmark

[86] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches/apprenticeship

[87] https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/uvm/2020/nov/201121-ny-trepartsaftale-skal-sikre-flere-faglaerte

A completely new goal is introduced that 80 percent of the students must have an agreement at the end of the basic course compared with today where less than half of the students have an agreement. The intention is that students will more likely continue their education. The agreement thus support the training of more skilled workers in Denmark. The framework for school internship benefits will also be increased from 2022 as the reimbursement to employers is increased when their apprentices are in school.

The parties also agree to set aside DKK 156 million (21 MEuro) annually from 2022 to meet recruitment challenges in the public labor market. In 2021, DKK 78 million (10.5 MEuro) will be allocated.

More attractiveness is expected in particular from a stronger focus on practical issues in primary and lower secondary education, reconstruction of the basic course in VET, greater security for apprenticeships and reduced drop-out rates, a stronger involvement of the municipalities in guidance, and a stronger focus on professional VET school boards. Furthermore, companies are involved in the endeavour to create new apprenticeships. The aim is to increase young people's knowledge of VET and their motivations for choosing VET programmes.

6. Overarching assessment

In March 2018, all the EFQEA criteria were already fully in place or to a large extent in place in Denmark. In 2018 and 2020, a number of system-wide developments were initiated (as discussed above).

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	No action taken

Estonia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Estonia, apprenticeship training is equivalent to a workplace-based form of study whereby work-based learning constitutes at least two-thirds of a curriculum.[88] The apprenticeship consists of both a curriculum, in the course of which a pupil performs work and study assignments with specific study objectives in the working environment under the supervision of an instructor, and a tripartite contract between the VET institution, the pupil (or their legal representative) and the company that conducts the work practice. The company regulates the relation and rights and obligations among parties involved and sets out the specific organisation of the workplace-based study component of the apprenticeship. The enterprise conducting the practical training pays remuneration for students who fulfill the job assignments at the enterprise, or a salary if there is a valid employment contract between the enterprise and the student.[89]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Estonia are regulated by the Vocational Education Institutions Act. Originally adopted in 2006, the act was reformed in September 2013 to integrate the regulation from 2007 on 'Policies and Conditions for Implementing Work-Based Learning'.[90]

3. History of apprenticeships

Traditional apprenticeships have strong roots in Estonia, however, it was not practiced in the second half of XX century. In 2002, workplace-based learning was firstly piloted in Estonia through the project 'Development of Work-Based Learning Programmes and Network in North-East and South Estonia and in the Islands Region'. It was then legalised as a new study form – next to school-based learning – by the Vocational Education Institutions Act in 2006, but remained unpopular. It was only in 2007, with the adoption of the regulation on 'Policies and Conditions for Implementing Workplace-Based Learning',[91] that apprenticeships were integrated into the VET system and formalised. The regulation was then absorbed into the reformed Vocational Education Institutions Act in September 2013. In recent years, expanding apprenticeship training became a clear priority in Estonia, in particular through a special ESF programme 'PRÕM'.[92] The programme was launched in 2015 to popularise and expand workplace-based learning.[93] The regulation on 'Policies and Conditions for Implementing Workplace-Based Learning' was also renewed in 2019 to include the mandatory clauses of a tripartite agreement and specify the amount of supervisors' guidance fees for companies.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Estonia has one **workplace-based learning (*Töökohapõhine õppevorm*)** scheme[94] since 2015 where apprentices can study at all levels and in all programmes in the Estonian VET system, without exception. The apprenticeship contract is only partly covered by the Labour Code (in terms of regulating the working time), thus, apprentices retain their status as students. After apprentices sign a work contract with a company, they continue to be fully covered by the Labour Code. Apprentices are entitled to all the customary rights of vocational school students, including apprentice wages. There were 1,729 students who participated in school and work-based vocational programmes during the 2017/2018 study year, 1,729 students in 2018/2019, and 1,919 students in 2019/2020.

There are also various active labour market policies and number of measures provided by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, which have apprenticeship elements.

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[88] As defined under Article 28 of the Vocational Education Institutions Act (2013), see: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/505022014002/consolide/current

[89] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/estonia

[90] https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/129122013002

[91] https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/129122013002

[92] Programme 'The systematic development of the practical training and apprenticeship learning in VET and HE' (PRÕM), See: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/estonia

[93] https://www.innove.ee/prom/tookohapohine-ope/

[94] http://www.kutseharidus.ee/tookohapohine-ope/

5. Main developments since March 2018

Since March 2018, no major new reforms have taken place in Estonia. Under the ESF project 'PRÕM', a pilot project on quality assessment of the workplace-based learning process in schools has started in 2019, and the project will continue in the next ESF programming period as 'PRÕM+'. The project will expand priority fields and target groups including youth, people with special educational needs and SMEs. It will also focus on improving the quality and accessibility of work-based learning, as well as the cooperation of employers and educational institutions in developing an internship system and work-based learning.

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, most of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place. Two criteria were in the initial stage and two criteria were in the advanced stage of implementation. Only one criterion had some discussions in recent years, but without any measures adopted.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)

Since March 2018 the most progress has been made in the following areas. In 2019, the regulation on 'Policies and Conditions for Implementing Workplace-Based Learning' was refined to include more details on the principles and the mandatory parts of **the written contract/agreement (criterion 1).** Secondly, the **regulatory framework (criterion 8)** was improved to support schools in ensuring the quality of work-based learning. During 2019 and 2020, the quality assessment of the workplace-based learning process will be piloted within the framework of the 'PRÕM' programme. Thirdly, from 2021 onward, **pedagocial support (criterion 3)** for in-company trainers will be expanded when the partial occupational qualification of company tutors will come into force.

One of the areas that still need further developments include **support for companies (criterion 10)**. Companies (particularly SMEs) need more support, especially when they take on a young person. At the moment, funding covers training at school, training of company tutors and the fees of company supervisors. Furthermore, despite the existing accreditation mechanism for **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)**, when the

school assesses whether the necessary conditions for conducting studies exist in the company beforehand, there are still some challenges to ensure the quality of learning in the company.

Finland

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Vocational education and training (VET), including apprenticeship training, is based on the principle of lifelong learning (continuous learning). Apprenticeship training is understood as learning primarily in a workplace environment through practical job tasks, complemented by studies in other learning environments, if needed. An apprenticeship is a fixed-term employment relationship or public service relationship between a student (at least 15 years old) and an employer (status of the apprentice: double status of employee and student, who is paid a salary). If an employer is estimated to incur costs by providing apprenticeship training, the education provider pays the employer training compensation as agreed in the agreement concerning apprenticeship training signed by the education provider and the employer. The amount of compensation is agreed between the employer and the education provider, taking into account the student's skills and experience, and the guidance and support measures that the student may need. In apprenticeship training, the average weekly working hours must be at least 25 hours.[95]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Finland are regulated in the following national acts:

- Act on Vocational Education and Training (2018);[96]
- Act on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision.[97]

3. History of apprenticeships

The first act concerning apprenticeship was enacted in 1923. Legislation was reformed in 1967 and after that in 1983, 1988 and 1992. The latest reform of VET was enacted on 1 January 2018.[98] The 2018 reform brought the Acts of vocational upper secondary education and training and vocational adult education and training together into one single act, which forms a consistent whole, including apprenticeships. According to this new act, VET is expected to respond more swiftly to the changes on the labour market and to adapt to individual competence needs.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Finland has one apprenticeship scheme, the **'Apprenticeship Training' scheme *Oppisopimuskoulutus*)**. The scheme covers all fields of education offered by VET, i.e.: initial VET qualifications (EQF level 4), further VET qualifications (EQF level 4) and specialist VET qualifications (EQF level 5). It can be either an entire qualification or a VET module which is part of regular studies. In 2018, 302,352 students were enrolled in VET to acquire a full qualification or a qualification module. In 2019, this was 296,547 students. Apprentices have a double legal status as an employee and student.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The **New Vocational Education and Training Act** (531/2017) entered into force on 1 January 2018. The 2018 reform brought the Acts of vocational upper secondary education and training and vocational adult education and training together into one single act, which forms a consistent whole, including apprenticeships. According to this new Act, vocational education and training is expected to respond more swiftly to the changes on the labour market and to adapt to individual competence needs. While it takes a while to put new legislation into practice, the percentage of VET students in apprenticeship training increased from 18.5% in 2018 to 22% in 2019. The number of apprentices varies depending on the type of qualification (IVET or CVET) and the student's age. The new legislation on vocational education and training includes two ways of organising learning at the workplace: apprenticeship training or training agreement. Both can be flexibly combined. Both of these should be taken into account in the overall review of workplace training.

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[95] Based on: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/finland

[96] https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2017/20170531 (valid from 1.1.2018).

[97] Laki opetus- ja kulttuuritoimen rahoituksesta https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2009/20091705 (29.12.2009/1705).

[98] https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2017/20170531 (finlex.fi > 531/2017).

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, most of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place or to a large extent in place. On four criteria developments are visible in recent years.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

A specific area where developments took place in recent years concerns **pedagogical support (criterion 3)**. In this area, however, there is need to update for example teacher's skills, knowledge and competences in working life collaboration and labour market needs. Another area in which developments took place is **career guidance (criterion 12)**. In this context, as part of the personal competence development plan (PCDP), describing how to achieve individual objectives in the best possible way, in different learning environments, including in apprenticeship training, **a** career plan is to be drawn up for the student. Furthermore, related to **increasing the attractiveness of apprenticeships (criterion 12)**, in 2020 the Government allocated €400,000 to develop a programme that encourages harder-to-reach-youth to take apprenticeships. The aim is to strengthen support and prepare youth to be ready for the apprenticeship.

Areas that still need further work concern

(1) **ensuring non-financial support to workplace trainers (criterion 3)**: education providers should better ensure that they offer support to workplace trainers so that they have required skills, competences and knowledge;

(2) **increasing the quality of students' personal competence development plans – PCDP (criterion 1)**: it is essential that the PCDP is well-prepared before apprenticeship training together with the employer or the workplace trainer, education provider and the student; and

(3) **collaboration between the education providers and the labour market (criterion 9)**: there is, for example, a need to update teachers' and workplace trainers' skills, knowledge and competences in working life collaboration and labour market needs.

France

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In France, an apprentice is defined as a 'young professional' who follows training that draws on an alternation of work-based (in-company) training and school-based training. The concept of apprenticeship is defined by law in the remit of the 'apprenticeship contract' (*contrat d'apprentissage*) and the 'professionalisation contract' (*contrat de professionalisation),* which are the two main apprenticeship schemes in France.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in France are regulated at the legislative and regulatory level (Labour code). A crucial reform took place with the Act of 5 September 2018 on the 'Freedom to Choose One's Professional Future' (*Loi pour la liberté de choisir son avenir professional*).

3. History of apprenticeships

7.0 The 'apprenticeship contract' in France has a long history, as it has been available since 1919. The 'professionalisation contract' is more recent and dates back to 2004, but this was preceded by a rather similar scheme, i.e. the 'qualification contract' (*contrat de qualification*).

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In France, there are two apprenticeship schemes. The first scheme is the **apprenticeship contract (*contrat d'apprentissage*)**,[99] enabling young people aged 16 to 29 years old (and persons with disabilities without any age limit) to follow a general education curriculum, both theoretical and practical, in order to acquire a professional qualification based on a diploma or a professional credential. The scheme is offered at all levels of professional education (from lower secondary to higher education), alongside school-based education. In 2019, 485,800 learners were enrolled in this scheme, who have the legal status of employee.

The second scheme is the **professionalisation contract (*contrat de professionnalisation*)**,[100] aimed at facilitating integration or reinsertion into the labour market. The contract alternates periods of general and technical education (offered by training providers) with periods of working in an activity related to the qualification. The scheme is available at all levels of professional education (from lower secondary to higher education) and targets the following groups: young people aged 16-25 years old who want to complete their initial training; unemployed people older than 26 and registered on *Pole Emploi's* job seekers list; people receiving State aid or are at risk of social exclusion. The apprentices in this scheme have the legal status of employee. In 2018, 235,399 learners were enrolled in this scheme.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The first major development is the **liberalisation of the market**. A single aid scheme was developed, offering financial support and the possibility to any business to open their own apprenticeship training centres (CFA). As a result of this, 554 new CFA were developed in 2019. The second major development is the **transfer of apprenticeship governance from the regions to the professional branches** as a result of the decree of 21 December 2018.[101] The third development is the **obligation for quality certification for training providers**, including CFA.[102] During the COVID-19 crisis, French authorities adopted measures adjusting apprenticeship schemes to the exceptional sanitary and economic context. Moreover, apprenticeship was given a central place in the French recovery plan, France Relance, with significant hiring incentives on apprenticeship and 'professionalisation' contracts.

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[99] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches/apprenticeship-contract

[100] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches/professionalisation-contract

[101] https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000037848195?r=nIf8mbR6LO

[102] Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the implementation of this measure has been postponed to 1 January 2022. See: https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/guide-lecture-referentiel-qualite.pdf

6. Overarching assessment

8.0 Already in March 2018, most EFQEA criteria were already fully in place or to a large extent in place, and the aforementioned Act of September 2018 led to a number of further developments. The only criterion on which implemented challenges persist is criterion 13 (transparency).

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Inisitial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Inisitial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Inisitial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Inisitial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

The most important developments since March 2018 are: (1) the **reform of financing (criterion 10: support for companies)**, following the principle "an apprentice + a company = a contract = guaranteed financing". The level of financing depends on the sector and comes form the skills operators (joint sectoral operators, "OPCO"); (2) **the professional branches are now responsible for the financing and governance (criterion 9: involvement of social partners)**, the social partners are involved in the certification policy for their sectors, from creation to implementation, repeal or transformation of certification; (3) **pre-apprenticeship training (*prépa apprentissage*) (criterion 12: career guidance)** funded by the Skills Investment Plan, intends to prepare young people to enter apprenticeships successfully. This preparatory programme can last from several weeks to several months, and priority is given to young people who are disabled or reside in the City's Priority Neighbourhood or Rural Revitalisation Zones.

Some challenges persist when it comes to **criterion 13 (transparency)**. Employers and future apprentices have various sites at their disposal to advertise and find job offers: government website, public employment service website, regional websites, branch websites and private websites. However, regarding training offers, the objective for 2021 is to geolocalise all training centers (whose number has increased since the reform). A mission was given to operators co-directed by the State and the regions, as well as to an intergovernmental mission, to work on transparency in order to clarify the offer of work-study training, and to achieve centralisation and consistency in information about apprenticeships.

Germany

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

According to the Federal Vocational Training Act (section 1.3) "initial training, through a systematic training programme, must impart the vocational skills, knowledge and abilities (occupational competence) necessary to engage in a form of skilled occupational activity in a changing working world. It must also enable trainees to acquire the necessary occupational experience". [103] Section 3 of the Act further stipulates that "vocational training is provided in companies engaged in economic activity, in comparable institutions (in-company training) and in vocational schools (school-based vocational training) … [both] learning venues collaborate in implementing vocational training".[104] Learners (apprentices) have a training contract with their employer and receive training according to an occupational profile. Apprenticeships last 2 to 3 ½ years. After passing the final examination, learners are awarded a recognised vocational qualification at the level of skilled workers. The term 'apprenticeship' (Lehre, Lehrlingsausbildung) is used only for programmes at upper secondary level.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

The main legal basis for the dual apprenticeship system at the upper secondary level is the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*).[105] It was adopted in 1969, amended in 2005 and 2020, and provides a common framework for the traditional system of dual VET, which had been subject to fragmented legislation until then.

3. History of apprenticeships

The origins of the apprenticeship system date back to the training model of the medieval guilds. The current 'dual' model of apprenticeship (combining in-company training and school-based instruction), evolved from the 1870s onwards and the dual system in its 'mature' form has been in place since the 1920s seeing harmonisation of its legal foundations in the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz).

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Germany has one apprenticeship scheme: **Dual VET (*Berufsausbildung*).** The dual system at the upper secondary level is open to anyone who has completed compulsory schooling, which ends at the age of 15. The VET Act defines no specific target groups , and there is no statutory age limit. The contract between learner and employer is governed by the labour legislation, unless specified otherwise in the VET Act, which means that in principle the learner has the status of an employee. In 2017, 990,748 pupils participated in school and work-based programmes. The number of learners enrolled in VET in 2019 amounts to 730,260 of which 492,276 are enrolled in dual VET. In addition to this, nother 255,282 learners are engaged in the transition sector belonging to in-school and work-based programmes (no information on which learners are following school or work-based programmes) hence, the total number

5. Main developments since March 2018

Germany saw many important developments since March 2018 related to Dual VET:

The **National Skills Strategy (*Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie*; 2019-2021)**will address the provision of continuing training as a response to the digital transition and investigates ways of further developing demand for continuing training from companies and individuals and increasing its availability.

The Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung; 2019-2021) aims to further increase the attractiveness, quality and integrative power of dual vocational training.

"Graduation and continuation – Education chains up to the vocational training qualification" (*Bildungsketten*; 2010-2026). This initiative aims to support adolescents in finishing school, finding an apprenticeship placement and successfully completing their vocational education and training.

Amendment of the Vocational Training Act (*Novellierung des Berufsbildungsgesetzes* (BBiG); 2020). The German government has strengthened and modernized vocational training with the amendments to the Vocational training Act.

[103] Berufsbildungsgesetz: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig_2005/
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Berufsbildungsgesetz: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig_2005/

Vocational training for sustainable development (BBNE) in the BNE global action programme (*Berufliche Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung*; 2015-2019). This initiative addressed training personnel and trainees in the dual training system on vocational education and training for sustainable development.

Amendment of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Novellierung des Aufstiegsfortbildungsgesetzes* (AFBG); 2020). This amendment aims to provide even greater support for those receiving funding to complete further training for all levels of regulated in the BBiG.

The Federal Government's **Skilled Labour Strategy (*Fachkräftestrategie*; 2018)** will support everyone in the workforce in gaining and adapting their qualifications and skills in a changing world of work and ensure that the skilled workers required to secure Germany's strength.

JOBSTARTER PLUS (since 2017). The aim is to win over small and micro enterprises (MSEs) in particular by offering regional or sector-specific support for in-company training.

Furthermore, there are **initiatives for specific occupational groups**, for instance the Nursing Professions Act (2017); and the Nursing Training Offensive (Ausbildungsoffensive Pflege, 2019-2023), affecting Dual VET.

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, all but two of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place in Germany. Only criterion 10 (support for companies) and 1 (flexible pathways) were not yet fully in place. For both, developments took place in recent years.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	No action taken

A specific area where developments took place in recent years concerns the **support for companies (criterion 10)**, especially in the COVID-19 context. Within the 2020 the Federal programme "Secure apprenticeship positions" (*Ausbildungsplätze sichern*) SMEs with up to 249 employees affected by the COVID 19 crisis could receive temporary support in the 2020/21 school year so to maintain their apprenticeship and so that young people could continue and successfully complete their apprenticeship. Concerning **flexible pathways (criterion 11)**, in the context of the amendment of the Vocational Training Act (2020), flexibility and mobility are considered, which has led to modified provisions for part-time initial VET and the introduction of new titles for higher VET qualifications.

Greece

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Greece are defined as education whereby learning alternates between the workplace and educational institution.[106] Apprenticeships are implemented based on specific curriculum, designed by the relevant authorities (e.g. Institute of Educational Policy). The employer is responsible for providing learning based on a specific programme which, in conjunction with the learning programme offered by the educational institution, leads to a professional specialisation.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Law 1346/1983[107] established the educational apprenticeship units of the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED, the Greek Public Employment Services) and enabled the OAED to be actively involved in the decisions concerning apprenticeships. Other relevant legislation includes: Law 1566/1985,[108] placing OAED's apprenticeship schools in secondary education and granting equivalent degrees to those of the Technical Vocational Schools (TES), and Law 2640/1998,[109] fully integrating Apprenticeship Schools into the institutional framework of Secondary Education. With the enactment of Law 3475/2006,[110] TES were replaced by the Vocational Lyceum (EPAL) and Vocational Schools (EPAS).

3. History of apprenticeships

TES were established by Royal Decree 14/03.06.1952 while Legal Decree 3971/02.09.1959 introduced the principle of dual learning. The EPAS apprenticeship scheme represents the traditional apprenticeship scheme in Greece run under the supervision of OAED. The EPAL apprenticeship scheme was foreseen by law 4186/2013 but was further operationalised and implemented for the first time in 2016 with two pilot projects in the area of Attica and Thessaloniki. The IEK apprenticeship was offered by Institutes for Vocational Training. Given the recent introduction of the IEK apprenticeship and the still low number of enrolments, the scheme is still considered a pilot.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Greece, there are two integrated apprenticeship schemes. The **EPAL apprenticeship scheme** ('Post-secondary year-Apprenticeship class') targets adult students who completed upper secondary vocational education and have an EPAL school leaving certificate (graduation certificate and professional specialisation degree). It is offered as an option to graduates (among other pathways to higher education, post-secondary VET or the labour market). The scheme offers qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5 and provides the student with an apprentice status. The number of enrolled learners in this scheme was 3,244 apprentices in 2019/2020 and 3,694 in 2018/2019.

The **EPAS apprenticeship** admit students aged 16-23 who completed at least the first grade of upper secondary school, either the general or the vocational one. The EPAS apprenticeship scheme is operated and supervised by OAED. The number of enrolled learners in this scheme in 2018/2019 was 6,934.

5. Main developments since March 2018

One of the main developments in Greece since March 2018 is the **adoption of Law 4554/2018**, which introduced a mandatory contract between all public and private sector bodies and their apprentice. Other regulations implemented as part of this law concern the professional rights of EPAL apprentices, evaluation and preparation of graduates for certification exams, and the compensation and insurance contributions of apprentices in private sector companies. Another main development is the establishment of a **National Apprenticeship Coordination Unit (ESOM)**, aimed at improving the institutional framework for apprenticeships as well as the design, implementation and assessment of apprenticeship programmes.

[106] Joint Ministerial Decision 26385/16-2-2017 "Quality Framework for Apprenticeship" (Gazette 491/ B/20.02.2017);
[107] Gazette 46/A/14.04.1983
[108] Gazette 167/A/30.09.1985
[109] Gazette 206/A/03.09.1998
[110] Gov. Gazette 146/A/13.07.2006

6. Overarching assessment

In March 2018, many EFQEA criteria for learning and working conditions were already fully in place and thus no significant progress was registered in relation to these criteria. More developments took place in relation to implementing the right framework conditions for apprenticeships.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Not in place at all	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Not in place at all	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Not in place at all	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Not in place at all	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

Greece has made significant progress on **criterion 6 (social protection)** with the implementation of Law 4186/2013 providing all apprentices with insurance by the Single Social Security Entity (EFKA) covering sickness, labour accidents and retirement. Progress was also made in relation to **criterion 8 (regulatory framework)** through the adoption of Joint Ministerial Decisions setting out the rights and obligations of all stakeholders involved.[111] Developments in relation to **criterion 5 (pay and/or compensation)** include the introduction of new provisions regarding the apprentices' compensation.

Implementation challenges remain in relation to **criterion 9 (involvement of social partners)** and the inclusion of stakeholders in designing learning outcomes or evaluating the existing learning outcomes. The methods of **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)** are also not fully implemented, as well as **pedagocical support (Criterion 3)** where formal training of trainers participating in apprenticeship schemes is necessary as well as the promotion/recognition of their role.

[111] https://www.minedu.gov.gr/texniki-ekpaideusi-2/mathiteia/thesmiko-plaisio-mathitias

Hungary

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

9.0 A renewed dual VET system was introduced in Hungary in the 2020/2021 school year. According to the new VET legislation (Act LXXX of 2019 on vocational education and training), a new type of apprenticeship contract entered into force. Apprenticeship contracts were replaced by employment contracts[112] which are concluded between the student and the company, as was also the case before. The difference is that in this framework, besides practical training, apprentices can also learn vocational subjects, and its duration will be counted towards seniority.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Hungary are regulated by the new VET legislation (Act LXXX of 2019 on vocational education and training)[113].

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeship training has a long tradition in Hungary. Since the early 2000s, apprenticeship training has been high on the political agenda. The legal framework allowing and supporting dual types of training has been developed over a decade. Since 2010, significant progress has been made to promote and strengthen dual VET in Hungary. In line with the VET 4.0 Strategy, the renewed dual VET system was introduced in September 2020.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

10.0 In Hungary, there is one apprenticeship scheme: **Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract**.[114] The apprenticeship based on employment contracts concluded between apprentices and companies. The apprenticeship scheme is implemented at upper secondary level in vocational school programmes. The apprenticeship wage is regulated by the government decree and it is a wage and not a stipend or fee. The time spent as an apprentice is defined as a working time, therefore not only the health insurance is valid for the apprentice, but the apprentice is entitled to the retirement benefits afterwards. In 2019, there were 50,216 apprentices and their number remained stable when compared to 2018 with 50,561 apprentices.

5. Main developments since March 2018

Guarantee by the Chamber[115] was an initiative of 2014 which entered into force as from June 2015. Its objective was to increase the number of apprenticeship placements. VET pupils at upper secondary level have to undertake their practical training at an enterprise or economic entity which is facilitated by the Chamber. According to the new VET regulation, a system of training centres will be established. The new VET Act (Act LXXX of 2019) distinguishes between three types of training centres: the sectoral training centre, the knowledge centre and the corporate training centre. In line with the ongoing VET reforms, training programmes of apprenticeship hosting companies have to be elaborated by the principle of learning outcomes.

6. Overarching assessment

11.0 Hungary already had nine criteria fully in place in 2018. These include **criterion 1, criterion 4, criterion 5, criterion 6, criterion 7, criterion 8, criterion 9, criterion 10, criterion 13.**

[112] In Hungarian: *szakképzési munkaszerződés*[112] http://njt.hu/cgi_bin/njt_doc.cgi?docid=216792.375465
[113] http://njt.hu/cgi_bin/njt_doc.cgi?docid=216792.375465
[114] *Tanulószerződésen alapuló duális szakképzés*
[115] In Hungarian: *kamarai garancia*

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)

Since then, the most significant progress has been made on developing the **regulatory framework (criterion 8)** for apprenticeships, **involving social partners (criterion 9)** and developing the **written contract (criterion 1).** In 2019, a well-structured regulatory framework on apprenticeships was put in place in Hungary. The social partner involvement has been further strengthened through the VET Innovation Council (SZIT), acting as a forum between the government and relevant VET stakeholders in the VET system. In the renewed VET system, a VET labour contract was also put in place. Apprenticeship contracts will be replaced by employment contracts concluded also between the apprentice and the company.

Learning outcomes (criterion 2) and **support for companies (criterion 10)** experienced some implementation challenges. Training apprentices to acquire skills aligned with the 4.0 Industrial Revolution, automation and digitalisation pose challenges in defining learning outcomes. The support for SMEs, to enhance their training capacity and enable them to provide training in an environment equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, are the main challenges under criterion 10.

Ireland

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

The Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland (2013)[116] defines apprenticeship as follows: an apprenticeship is a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the work place with learning in an education or training centre (a dual system), whose completion prepares the participant for a specific occupation; and leads to a qualification nationally recognised under the National Framework of Qualifications at any level from Level 5 upwards.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships are regulated by the following Acts: 1967 Industrial Training Act;[117] SI 168/1997 Labour Services Act 1987 – Apprenticeship Rules;[118] and an "Apprenticeship Bill" is currently going through legislative changes.

3. History of apprenticeships

Historically, apprenticeships in Ireland were part of a medieval guild system. In 1926, the government established a Commission on Technical Training which culminated in the passing of two acts, The Vocational Education Act of 1930 and The Apprenticeship Act of 1931.[119] Since then, the Apprenticeship Act (1959) and the Industrial Training Act (1967) have been adopted. A major programme of reform commenced in 2014, following the publication of Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland.[120] On foot of the Review, the Apprenticeship Council was established in November 2014.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Ireland, there is only one apprenticeship scheme set out in legislation with two main components**: 25 craft apprenticeships**, which were in place prior to 2016, these consist in four year programmes leading to qualifications at level 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications; and, as of October 2020, **33 apprenticeship programmes** led by consortia of sector specific employers and education providers. These programmes range in duration from 2 to 4 years and lead to qualifications at level 5-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Apprenticeships are open to persons of all age groups above the statutory school leaving age. Every apprentice should be employed under an approved Contract of Apprenticeship for the duration of the training. Apprenticeship training should be of substantial depth and duration (it should have a duration of no less than two years), and the apprentice should be employed in a real job. The structure of the programme should provide for more than 50% workplace-based learning.[121] The apprentice is considered an employee but with some differences and their contract refers specifically to "apprenticeship". In 2019, the total registration was 17,045 at end September 2019 and 18,282 at the end of September 2020.

5. Main developments since March 2018

There has been one main country-level development concerning apprenticeships in Ireland since March 2018. The **Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and Traineeships for 2016-2020** aimed at enrolling 31,000 people in apprenticeships by 2020. 33 new apprenticeship programmes were developed. The expansion programme is supported by a major communications and social media campaign[122]. **A successor to the current**

[116] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-Apprenticeship-Training-in-Ireland.pdf
[117] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1967/act/5/enacted/en/html?q=1967+Industrial+Training
[118] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1987/act/15/enacted/en/html?q=1987+Labour+Services+Act
[119] McCarthy (1976) Apprenticeships in Ireland. Collection studies. Social policy series no. 33. Brussels. July 1976.
[120] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-Apprenticeship-Training-in-Ireland.pdf
[121] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/ireland
[122] https://apprenticeship.ie/ https://gacomp.ie/

Action Plan is being drafted and will cover the period from 2021-2025 aimed at 10,000 new apprentice registrations per annum by 2025.[123]

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, most of the EFQEA criteria were already fully in place or to a large extent in place in Ireland.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Not in place at all	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

A specific criterion where developments took place in recent years is **awareness raising (Criterion 12).** The 'Generation Apprenticeship' campaign raises awareness of apprenticeships as a vibrant career and employee development pathway. Another area where developments took place in recent years is **Criterion 11**. A range of education and training preparatory programmes are available to apprentices who do not meet the general minimum entry requirements for entry to apprenticeships and may wish to undertake additional study to meet entry requirements. These are delivered both in further and higher education settings and include the 'Access to Apprenticeship' programme, general learning programmes, or pre-apprenticeship programmes. A total of 300 learners availed of dedicated pre-apprenticeship training in 2019, growing to 580 places in 2020. A final area which has undergone developments is **Criterion 9**. New apprenticeships are being developed by industry-led consortia that include representatives of employers, employees, education and training institutions and public bodies. Stakeholder feedback and input is integral to the ongoing quality assurance and course review processes. This engagement is required for a programme to meet the conditions of the QQI (Quality and Qualifications

[123] https://a.storyblok.com/f/83224/x/0dc4357d47/apprenticeshipconsultationjuly2020.pdf

Ireland) periodic review processes for apprenticeship programmes. This safeguards the voice of stakeholders into the future. Areas that still need further work concern **career guidance (criterion 12)**, since a recent survey showed that people do not learn about apprenticeships though career guidance. Another area for further development involves **work experience abroad (criterion 11)**, as the development of formal opportunities for workplace experience abroad has not yet progressed, and there has only been progression internally.

Italy

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Italy, as per Article 41 of Legislative Decree 81/2015, an apprenticeship is understood as 'an employment contract for an indefinite period aimed at the training and employment of young people'.[124] It is an open-ended subordinate employment contract aimed at the achievement of an educational qualification and/or an occupational qualification – depending on the type of apprenticeship – through the combination of work-based learning and education and training delivered by training institutions, and work experience.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Italy are regulated in the following national acts: Law 24/6/1997; Legislative Decree 112/2008; Legislative Decree 167/2011; Law 12/11/2011, n. 183; Legislative Decree 20/3/2014 n. 34 (so-called Jobs-Act); Conversion Law 78/2014 (with Legislative Decrees 81/2015 and 150/2015); Legislative Decree 81/2015. National Collective Labour Agreements or Inter-sectors Agreement regulate apprenticeships in detail with the obligation to respect some general principles (indicated in Article 42, Legislative Decree 81/2015).

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were first introduced in Italy in 1955, targeting people aged 15 to 20 years old to support their access to the labour market. In 1997, apprenticeships were opened to people aged 16 to 24 years old, the duration was changed from 18 months to four years, and a minimum reuirement of 120 hours of workplace-based learning per year was introduced. Legislative changes introduced in 2003 gave apprenticeships the structure it still hase today, i.e. consisting of three different types of apprenticeship schemes, eligible for people up until 29 years old. The most recent reforms of 2011 and 2015 aimed at promoting employment among young people.[125]

4. Apprenticeship schemes

12.0 In Italy, there are three apprenticeship schemes. The first scheme (Type 1), implemented in 2015, is the **'Apprenticeship for vocational qualification and diploma, upper secondary education diploma and high technical specialisation certificate'** (*Apprendistato per la qualifica e il diploma professionale, il diploma di istruzione secondaria superiore e il certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore*). The scheme allows young people such as students or employees aged 15 to 25 (upper secondary school level) to complete their right/duty to education and training. The aim of the scheme is for learners to gain one of the following qualifications recognised by the education and training system: a vocational qualification, a vocational diploma, an upper secondary education diploma or a high technical specialisation certificate. In 2019, 11,059 learners (or 2.76% of all apprentices) were enrolled in this scheme.

13.0 The second scheme (Type 3), introduced in 2003 and reformed in 2015, is the **'Higher education and research apprenticeship'** (*Apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca*). This scheme enables 18-to-29-year-olds, such as students or employees, to acquire qualifications usually offered through school-based programmes at post-secondary and tertiary levels, including a doctoral degree. The aim of the scheme is to help individuals to complete higher education and enter the labour market (also as a "researcher") through a work-based experience. In 2019, 970 learners (or 0.25% of all apprentices) were enrolled in this scheme.

14.0 In addition to the aforementioned Type 1 and Type 3 apprenticeship schemes, there is also the Type 2 apprenticeships scheme, i.e. **the occupation-oriented and enterprise-based apprenticeship**. This scheme was implemented in 2015 and targets both young people and adult workers (aged 18 -29) who were made redundant. It has a training component, but this is marginal: a maximum of 120 hours in three years, to be carried out inside or outside the company. No qualification from the formal VET system is awarded upon completion, but the apprentice can become a skilled worker by acquiring a contractual qualification defined and recognised by collective labour agreements. In 2019, 388,225 learners were enrolled in this scheme, which represents 76.9% of all apprentices).

[124] http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/06/24/15G00095/sg
[125] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4159_en.pdf

5. Main developments since March 2018

15.0 There has been one main development concerning apprenticeships in Italy since March 2018. In 2019, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies put in place the **National Technical Board for Apprenticeships**. The Board is composed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University and Research, the National Agency of Active Labour Policies (ANPAL), the Conference of State Regions, trade unions and social partners, and its aim is to promote a structured and transparent dialogue between all actors involved in apprenticeships, in line with the EFQEA criterion 9. The Board aims to boost Type 1 apprenticeships by simplifying legislation and to increasing the attractiveness of the scheme among enterprises.

6. Overarching assessment

16.0 The table below demonstrates that most of the EFQEA criteria were either already fully in place or to a large extent in place in March 2018. Only two criteria (i.e. criteria 8, 11 and 14) were highlighted as only being somewhat in place.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)

The three criteria on which most progress has been made in Italy include criterion 7, criterion 8 and criterion 9. For what concerns criterion 7, it is interesting to note that, although for apprentices the workplace has to comply

with relevant rules and regulations on working conditions, in particular health and safety legislation established at national level, the Interministerial Decree of 12 October 2015 set up **training, technical and structural requirements for enterprises hiring apprentices**. For what concerns criterion 8, it is important to note that in order to promote apprenticeship pathways Directorial Decrees have provided for increasing funding opportunities of dual pathways. The Ministry of labour allowed regions to finance dual pathways with financial resources which are originally allocated only for VET pathways. More specifically, after having exhausted the financial resources provided for dual pathways**, regions could employ in dual pathways the financial resources earmarked for VET pathways**. The aim of this initiative is to introduce more flexibility in allocation funds and give regions the opportunity to enhance the Type 1 apprenticeship with additional funds. Before 2018 this opportunity was not allowed. Additionally, relating to criterion 9, full participation of social partners in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes is guaranteed by law. In addition to this, in the process of policy making, **social partners play an important role by participating in regional bilateral committees and by signing decentralised (local and company-level) agreements.** With reference to Type 1, trade unions and employer organisations reacted promptly to the 2015 changes in the legal framework by signing a number of dedicated sector and cross-sector national or territorial agreements. Furthermore, the creation of the central coordinating body "Technical body for the apprenticeship" calls for their consultation.

Criteria that still need further work concern criterion 2 and criterion 11. In order to render skills gained through apprenticeships more visible and useful, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education within the State-Regions Conference, are **currently experimenting how to carry out the certification of learning outcomes, including informal competences** (e.g. transversal competences, soft skills) **also in apprenticeships**. Additionally, for what concerns criterion 11, transnational mobility of apprentices is promoted by the Erasmus+ Programme, this is limited to a small number of participants: this results in the weak participation of enterprises and socio-economic actors as project beneficiaries or project partners. The Ministry of labour and social policies (the National Authority in the VET field) and INAPP are working on **raising awareness among enterprises/companies in order to promote apprentices' mobility**, with particular regard to the promotion of KA1 projects. Also the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for apprenticeship experiences related to Higher Technical Institutes, has launched several projects with its Erasmus+ National Agency INDIRE to promote mobility among apprentices.

Latvia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Latvia, the 'craft apprentice' is defined as a person who, in order to acquire the craft, has joined a crafts company or an educational institution and has signed a training contract either with an employer or a training institution.[126] Craftsmanship programmes lead to journeyman and master craftsman diplomas after passing the relevant exams. The term 'work-based learning' (WBL), based on the new apprenticeship scheme, refers to students who acquire practical skills and knowledge primarily in a real working environment of the company.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Latvia are regulated by the following national acts:

- The Law on Craftsmenship, adopted in 1993;[127]
- 'Education development guidelines for 2014-2020', adopted in 2014;[128]
- 'The Vocational Education Act', amended in 2017;[129]
- Regulation on 'Procedures for Organisation and Implementation of Work-based Learning', adopted in 2016;[130]
- Regulation on the 'Implementation of the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment"', adopted in 2017;[131] and related guidelines on the 'Organisation and Implementation of WBL', adopted in 2017.

3. History of apprenticeships

Craft apprenticeships were first implemented in 1992. Since 2012/2013, there have been ongoing discussions on the implementation of the WBL component of the VET system between the Latvian government and various cooperation partners. In the academic years 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, a limited number of VET institutions took part in the implementation of the WBL pilot project. The results of the implementation of the WBL pilot project served as a basis for further WBL developments in Latvia.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Latvia has one apprenticeship scheme, i.e. the '**Work-based learning' scheme**. The scheme was introduced in 2016 and enables students to acquire practical skills and knowledge primarily in a real company working environment. For IVET students, at least 25% of the total duration of the progamme should be composed of practical training in the company, and for CVET students this should be at least 70%. The scheme targets VET learners at EQF levels 2-4 (in initial and continuing VET). The apprentice is entitled to a remuneration in the form of a wage or an allowance, which is exempt from income tax. In 2018, 1,163 learners were enrolled in this scheme; in 2019, this was reduced to 653 apprentices despite a currently implemented ESF project which is a key policy instrument for promoting and implementing apprenticeships.[132]

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main developments in Latvia relate to the simplification of the costs, implementation and reporting mechanisms of the 2018 ESF OP 851 project on work-based learning, for instance simplifying reporting to increase support to companies involved in the provision of tutors in the work-based learning and training

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126 In the Law on Crafts, see: http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63052

127 Supreme Council (1993). Latvijas Republikas likums: Par amatniecību [Law on crafts]. Last amended 24.4.2008. http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63052

128 Saeima (2014). Saeimas paziņojums 2014.gada 22.maijā: par Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādņu 2014.-20.gadam apstiprināšanu [Education development guidelines for 2014-20]. http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406

129 Saeima (1999a). Profesionālās izglītības likums [Vocational education law]. Last amended 22.06.2017. http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244

130 http://likumi.lv/ta/id/283680-kartiba-kada-organize-un-isteno-darba-vide-balstitas-macibas

131 http://likumi.lv/ta/id/283736-darbibas-programmas-izaugsme-un-nodarbinatiba-8-5-1-specifiska-atbalsta-merka-palielinat-kvalificetu-profesionalas-izglitibas-i

132 ESF project "On the participation of VET learners in apprenticeships and training in companies". Available at: http://www.lddk.lv/projekts/darba-vide-balstitas-macibas/, implemented by the Employers' Confederation of Latvia

practices. In the next financial period (2021-2027), it is planned to strengthen the capacity of Sector Expert Councils (SECs), to strengthen the sectoral methodological capacity of VET institutions and their monitoring activities. Under the envisaged college reform, it is foreseen to introduce apprenticeship (work-based learning) also at a college level (EQF level 5).

6. Overarching assessment

In Latvia, most of the criteria were either already fully in place or to a large extent in place in March 2018. Developments have taken place on no less than 7 criteria in the last three years.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	No actions taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

With regards to **pedagogical support (criterion 3)**, an agreement was reached among the key stakeholders on joint approaches for the requirements of WBL tutors, as well as on the content and delivery of the training programmes. With support of the Erasmus+, the tandem training methodology was applied in many training courses – implementing joint training of WBL trainers and tutors from schools and companies. To increase **flexible pathways (criterion 11)**, Latvia plans to introduce apprenticeships (work-based learning) at college level (EQF level 5) to allow access to other learning opportunities at a higher learning level. Finally, to increase the **involvement of social partners (criterion 9)**, Latvia plans to strengthen the capacity of Sector Expert Councils (SECs) under the next ESF programming period.

Career guidance and awareness raising (criterion 12) remains a challenge, particularly providing more individualised and targeted approaches. Also, the **transparency of apprenticeship offers and access (criterion 13)** has to be continued and intensified among various target groups and through various channels. Finally, although some measures are being taken, more work is needed to improve the procedures and results of **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)**, and no specific schemes are in place to **support small SMEs (criterion 8)** in the delivery of apprenticeship training.

Lithuania

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

According to Article 19 of the Law on VET (1997, last amended in 2017),[133] VET in Lithuania can be organised as either a school-based or apprenticeship-based form. The apprenticeship type is a form of VET whereby the training-based component of VET delivered by a company. When organising an apprenticeship, the VET provider concludes a VET contract with an apprentice and a company. The employer and the apprentice sign a bilateral apprenticeship employment contract. Theoretical training is provided by the VET institution or at the workplace by the company in case it has a license to deliver a VET programme and the relative appropriate conditions.[134]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

There are three main relevant legal acts regulating apprenticeship training in Lithuania:

- Law on VET, last amended in 2017;[135]
- The Labour code, amended in 2016 to regulate the apprenticeship employment contract;[136]
- The Procedure for the organisation of VET in the form of apprenticeship, adopted in 2019.[137]

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeship regulation in Lithuania entered into force in 2008, when the Law on VET was amended. However, apprenticeships became fully operational only from 2016, when the Labour code introduced the apprenticeship employment contract and clarified the status of apprentice, remuneration requirements and work/learning components. At the moment, however, the uptake of apprenticeships in Lithuania remains low.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Lithuania, there is one apprenticeship scheme. **VET in a form of apprenticeship (*Profesinis mokymas pameistrystės organizavimo forma*)** was introduced in 2008, after the Law on VET was amended. The scheme covers all fields of education offered (from level 1 to level 5). Apprentices have a double legal status as an employee and a student. Since 2016, the Lithuanian public employment service provides financial support for companies subsidising up to 70 % of previously unemployed apprentices' salary and social security. Moreover, subsidies funded by the ESF are available for employers to support apprenticeship training of companies' employees and for VET institutions to support apprenticeship training. In 2018, 3,449 student were enrolled in apprenticeship training.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main development concerning apprenticeships in Lithuania is the **adoption of the procedure and legal framework for the organisation of VET in the form of apprenticeship in 2019**. This procedure includes the rights, duties and responsibilities of VET providers and employers as well as quality assurance issues. The new regulation has also enabled the establishment of the Subdivision of apprenticeship in Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre. The institution coordinates the implementation of apprenticeship and aims to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships by creating an interactive website for future apprentices.[138]

As part of Lithuania's **Plan for the DNA of the Future Economy**, financial measures have been agreed to encourage apprenticeships for the unemployed, employed and those who wish to gain a qualification or requalify in the form of apprenticeship during 2020-2021.[139] The financial support should also develop VET in a form of

[133] https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b0b6cda0eb0a11e7a5cea258c39305f6/asr
[134] https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b0b6cda0eb0a11e7a5cea258c39305f6/asr
[135] https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b0b6cda0eb0a11e7a5cea258c39305f6/asr
[136] https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/10c6bfd07bd511e6a0f68fd135e6f40c/asr
[137] https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/83bdea30f55e11e4927fda1d051299fb
[138] https://www.pameistryste.lt/en/main-page/
[139] https://finmin.lrv.lt/uploads/finmin/documents/files/LT_ver/DNR%20plano%20dokumentai/KONCEPCIJOS/VEIKSMO%20%C4%AEGYVENDINIMO%20KONCEPCIJA(3).DOC.docx

apprenticeships, raise attractiveness and promote VET corresponding to combined interests of different target groups and social partners.

6. Overarching assessment

The table below shows that many EFQEA criteria were already fully or to a large extent in place in Lithuania in March 2018. Due to a recently adopted Law on VET, many changes took place in relation to all the EFQEA criteria which required further development.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change
Criterion 13: Transparency	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change

As a result of the Procedure for the organisation of VET in the form of apprenticeship, approved by the government in 2019, a **regulatory framework for apprenticeships was established (criterion 8)**. The renewed VET programmes also include guidelines on what **learning outcomes** should be achieved and individualised training plans for apprentices agreed by both VET schools and companies **(criterion 2).** The current **written contract (criterion 1)** between either the employer and the learner or the learner, the employer and the training institution defines the rights and obligations of the apprentice, employer and the VET institution.

Areas that still need further work concern **cost-sharing arrangements and financial support to companies (criterion 10)**, as most apprenticeship schemes are mainly financed by EU funds which does not provide stable financing mechanism for routine procedures. Strengthened public funding incentives for VET institutions that respond to labour market needs (e.g. apprenticeship scheme) would benefit future skills needs or the strategic value of Lithuania's economic sectors. **Quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)** are still in a development stage and the quality assurance schemes are mainly directed to VET providers, not employers. The **involvement of social partners (criterion 9)** remains limited, even though broad conditions for the representations of employers, employee and/or intermediary bodies are in place**.**

Luxembourg

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

According to the 2019 amendment to the law on VET introduced in 2008, apprentices are defined as *"learners pursuing their apprenticeship under apprenticeship contract"* (Art. 2, 11). The provisions regulating apprenticeship contracts and conditions applying to apprenticeship tutors are regulated in the Labour Code (Art L.111-1 to L.111-9). The VET law (2008/2019) also defines 'alternating education' as *"training which is attended in alternation between professional and school environment"* (Art. 2, 9).

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Luxembourg are regulated by

- The Vocational Training Act of 2019,[140] which provides the legal basis for apprenticeships and revises the initial Vocational Training Reform Act of 2008;[141]
- The Labour Code, which defines apprenticeship contracts; and
- A legal basis for cross-border apprenticeships (described below).

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have a long-standing history in Luxembourg, dating back to the medieval guilds. At the end of the 19th century, the professional chambers introduced requests for school training of apprentices, and in 1896, the Chamber of Deputies adopted a law setting a legal base for the first school of skilled crafts. Apprenticeship contracts were regulated for the first time in 1929 and revised in 1945. In 1979, a new VET law differentiated between school-based VET, leading to a technical diploma allowing access to higher education, and the apprenticeship scheme in concomitant tracks, leading to a technical and professional aptitude certificate (CATP) or a manual aptitude certificate (CCM). In 1990, an amendment to the law introduced a two-level certification by an intermediary technical and professional initiation certificate (CITP).

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Luxembourg, there is one apprenticeship scheme, i.e. the regular **Dual Apprenticeship scheme**. This scheme is part of upper secondary education, thereby targeting pupils from the age of 15 (as well as adults) and leads to three different qualifications (at EQF levels 2, 3 and 4[142]). The programmes to which learners are admitted depend on their school results at lower secondary education level. In 2019, 3,477 learners were enrolled in initial vocational training under apprenticeship.

There are also **two complementary schemes** for people who could not find a placement through the regular scheme described above. The first scheme is practical training provided by public training centres. In 2019, 419 learners participated in CCP and DAP tracks in public training centres (school years 2018/19 and 2019/2020), and 68 learners attended a "preparatory employer's training". The second scheme supports cross-border apprenticeships for specific qualifications for which theoretical training is not available in Luxembourg due to the small number of participants. In this scheme, the practical component is carried out in a company in Luxembourg; the school-based component is provided by a school in a neighbouring country (mostly France,

[140] http://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/rgd/2016/08/31/n1/jo

[141] http://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2008/12/19/n19/jo#:~:text=V1.9.7%20%2D%20202010071413-,Loi%20du%2019%20d%C3%A9cembre%202008%20portant%20r%C3%A9forme%20de%20la%20formation,des%20fonctionnaires%20de%20l'%C3%89tat%3B&text=1.-,cr%C3%A9ation%20d'un%20%C3%A9tablissement%20public%20pour%20le%20d%C3%A9veloppement%20de%20la,2.

[142] (1) a vocational capacity certificate (CCP - Certificat de Capacité Professionnelle) at level 2 of the EQF; (2) a vocational aptitude diploma (DAP - Diplôme d'Aptitude Professionnelle) at level 3 of the EQF; and (3) a technician's diploma (DT - diplôme de technicien) at level 4 EQF.

Belgium or Germany). In 2019, 186 learners participated in cross-border apprenticeships, of which 36 came from Luxembourg.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main development which took place in Luxembourg since March 2018 is the **revision of the Vocational Training Act in June 2019**. The amendment included provisions in the Labour Code related to apprenticeship contracts, the legal rights and duties of apprenticeships, as well as the re-introduction of the evaluation of grades alongside competence-based assessment. The duration of apprenticeship training was also extended automatically by a maximum of one year, in case learners needed additional time to complete or repeat their modules. Another interesting development was the ESF co-funded **'Sprong an d'Léier' initiative**, which ran from January 2019 until December 2020 and aimed at supporting young adults (18-24) looking for an apprenticeship into a suitable job, with the intent to offer them more personalised support. An interesting future development is **Diploma+**, a customised and flexible continuing VET programme. The programme is currently being piloted with 80 participants (from October 2020 until July 2021).

6. Overarching assessment

In March 2018, ten of the fourteen EFQEA crireria were already fully in place or to a large extent in place in Luxembourg. Four criteria were only somewhat in place, and discussions have started to develop actions.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures yet
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures yet
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures yet
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures yet

The main developments since March 2018 are firstly, in June 2019, **major revisions to the VET regulatory framework** (criterion 1: written contract), which introduced stipulations in the Labour Code with regards to the rights and duties of the different parties. Secondly, a **direct subsidy to companies for continuing training of apprentices** (criterion 10: support for companies) was also introduced, extending the number of apprentices or re-employing laid-off apprentices. The amended law of 2019 also introduced some minor changes to the entry criteria for higher education, making it **possible for DAP and DT learners (EQF levels 3 and 4) to access**

higher technical education (at EQF level 5) (criterion 11: flexible pathways) after completing compulsory preparatory modules.

More work needs to be done to **harmonise pedagogical training of in-company trainers** (criterion 3: pedagogical support), which currently differs by profession and trade. Under the apprenticeship scheme, it is currently **not enabled to conduct work-based training abroad as part of apprenticeships** (criterion 11: flexible pathways and mobilty) due to the way in which the alternation of work-based learning and school-based learning is organised and the lack of a cross-border legal framework concerning labour law, social security and insurance. There is also **no comprehensive quality assurance framework in place for apprenticeships** (criterion 14: quality assurance and graduate tracking). At the moment, quality control is limited to serendipitous controls on workplace safety, conducted by the chambers' apprenticeship counsellors. Skills are assessed against learning outcomes defined by curricula commissions. The matching between curricula and occupational skill requirements is continuously monitored by a research unit on competences and curricula design, reporting to curricula commissions.

Malta

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

As per Article 2 of the 'Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' (Cap. 576), an 'apprentice' is a *"learner engaged in training programmes for apprenticeships in accordance with this Act"*. Furthermore, in the same Act an 'apprenticeship' is defined as a *"programme in which apprentices are engaged on joint programmes of school-based learning at a licensed VET provider and work-based learning with a registered sponsor, leading to a recognised vocational qualification or award"*.[143]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Malta are regulated by the following national act:

- The Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act (Cap. 576) of 6 March 2018.

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships in Malta have a long history and already existed as a form of financial incentive for youth back in the early 19th century. The first official state technical school dates back to 1893, when apprenticeships were offered in carpentry, joinery, carving and stucco work.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

Malta has one apprenticeship scheme, **the state-run Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), today known as Jobsplus**[144] (as enacted in Part VII of the Employment and Training Services Act (Cap.343)), managed as VET in the form of active labour market policies (ALMP) and other services for the unemployed. Until 2014, this organisation was also responsible for the organisation of apprenticeships – MCAST (Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology) took over most of its functions after 2014. As youth unemployment is not the main problem in Malta, apprenticeships are seen as a tool for addressing the skills gap and difficulties to matching skills to jobs. These apprenticeships are positioned at post-secondary level. In 2019, 1,347 apprentices were enrolled.

5. Main developments since March 2018

In March 2018, the Maltese Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act came into force, providing a framework for the development of apprenticeships and internships in VET. Since the adoption of the Act, developments concerned firstly, the development of Degree Apprenticeships (during the academic year 2019/2020, 6 degree programmes at MCAST were included in the apprenticeship offering); and secondly, the strengthening of agreements with key stakeholders (MCAST strengthened its agreements with the National Skills Council, Malta Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry for Education and Employment to further emphasise the importance of work-based learning and to formulate the necessary synergies amongst key stakeholders). An ongoing reform is the further implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework and Standards.

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, half of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place and only two (criterion 3 and 4) were somewhat in place. On all criteria developments are visible in recent years.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this

[143] http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12801&l=1
[144] Jobsplus is the Maltese Public Employment Service.

		did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)

Most advancement took place in relation to the **regulatory framework (criterion 8)**, as this was established through the 'Work-based Learning and Apprenticeship Act' in 2018. Its implementation by MCAST can be considered as an important leap to revamp the apprenticeship schemes in Malta. This has given mutual benefits to the key players. It provided the opportunity to firstly, the VET provider to design curricula which are relevant to the industry; secondly, the industry to acquire trained employees following a period of apprenticeship; and thirdly, students sponsored by the employers to be respected as employees. Another key development area related to the **written contract (criterion 1)**. Following the publication of the WBL act, a renewed training agreement was put in place which stipulates all the necessary obligations of employers, students and VET providers. Finally, also the process to have work-based qualifications being described in terms of **learning outcomes (criterion 2)** was completed to take into account the work-based learning component conducted during the apprenticeship scheme.

Areas that still need further work concern **career guidance (criterion 12)**: a stronger link between secondary schools and VET providers is required particularly when guiding students for apprenticeship paths; **pedagogical support (criterion 3)**: supervisors and in-company trainers need to be trained in order to provide the necessary facilitation to apprentices during their apprenticeship journey; and finally, **workplace component (criterion 4)**: while this component forms part of all qualifications on apprenticeships, the overall quality of the experience needs to be addressed, meaning that closer monitoring and supervisory functions are required to improve the overall quality of workplace learning.

The Netherlands

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Secondary vocational education (*middelbaar beroepsonderwijs, mbo*) can take up to four years to complete, depending on the level of training. The 'mbo' contains four different levels (NQF levels 1 to 4) and students can choose between two different pathways (i.e. school-based and workplace-based VET). An important part of vocational education and training (VET) consists of learning in practice, known as work placement (*beroepspraktijkvorming, bpv*).

According to the Education and Vocational Education Law, Article 7.2.7, apprenticeships (*beroepsbegeleidende leerweg: bbl*) are educational programmes leading to a vocational qualification. The programmes must comprise 850 hours of education per year, of which at least 200 hours must be school-based instruction (*begeleide onderwijsuren*) and at least 610 hours must be work placement (*beroepspraktijkvorming, bpv*). In practice, this means that apprentices usually spend 1 day per week in the education institution and 4 days per week in the company.[145]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships are regulated by the following national act:

- The Law on Education and Vocational Education and Training (*Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs*) 1995.[146]

3. History of apprenticeships

The current VET system is based on the 1995 Law on Education and Vocational Education and Training. VET education, including apprenticeships, existed long before that, but in a different and more sector-based structure.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

The Netherlands has one apprenticeship scheme, the **Dual Pathway (*Beroepsbegeleidende Leerweg*).** In this scheme, students typically spend four days a week at the workplace and one day per week at a VET school. They (usually) have the status of apprentice, in that they have an employment contract with their employer and receive a minimum wage. This scheme is offered at NQF/EQF levels 1 to 4. In 2019, the total number of students was 130,367, accounting for 25% of the total number of VET students.[147]

5. Main developments since March 2018

In both VET pathways, the school-based training (*beroepsopleidende leerweg (bol)*) and the work-based training (*beroepsbegeleidende leerweg (bbl)*), students can choose smaller elective courses (*keuzedelen*). Since these electives were only introduced in 2015, they were surrounded with quite some restrictive regulations. Preceding a future change of law, from study year 2020-2021, VET institutions are already allowed to offer a great variety of electives (*keuzedelen*). These no longer have to match with certain (up till now centrally defined) qualification dossiers and can even be made available to students from other institutions. This change in policy should lead to more tailor-made education for students preparing them better for a job or continued (higher) education.[148]

[145] ROA (2015), Schoolverlaters tussen onderwijs en arbeidsmarkt 2014, p.4.

[146] Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs, 31 oktober 1995: https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0007625/2020-09-01

[147] https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/83852NED/table

[148] https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2019/12/18/betere-voorbereiding-op-arbeidsmarkt-of-vervolgopleiding-door-actueler-en-groter-aanbod-keuzedelen-in-het-mbo

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, all of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place or to a large extent in place in the Netherlands. All EFQEA criteria were applied, they either are prescribed by law (ever since 1997, in the Act on Adult and vocational education (*Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs*)) or as part of a (law based) protocol by SBB (foundation for the Collaboration between VET and the Labour Market) that is obligatory for all learning companies.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	No action taken

A specific area where developments took place in recent years concerns **learning outcomes (criterion 2)**. In this area, developments took place to ensure the elective courses were better used in the system (*keuzedelen*), n.b. making them freely available, independently from the VET provider. In addition, developments took place in relation to **career guidance (criterion 12)**. Promoting guidance for all students in VET has become an important element of Dutch policy. Extra money (around € 600,000 a year) has been made available for this purpose. Activities are coordinated by a platform involving the Association of Dutch VET Colleges (*MBO raad*). Finally, developments took place to improve **transparency (criterion 13)**. The national website 'Stagemarkt.nl' on internships and apprenticeships provides an overview of all apprenticeship opportunities, and is updated and improved on an ongoing basis, recently also by integrating EURES-information.

Despite a well-developed apprenticeship system, some limited implementation challenges remain, related to providing **support for companies (criterion 10)**: there has been a (minor) cut on the budget for the Subsidy regulation from 2019; **career buidance (criterion 12)**: despite extra funding, it could still be improved; and **transparency (criterion 11)**: the use of the available web-based information by VET students, including those looking for an apprenticeship, could still be improved.

Poland

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

There are two forms of practical vocational education (*praktyczna nauka zawodu*) in Poland. They are organised as practical training (*zajęcia praktyczne*) and work placements (*praktyki zawodow*e). Practical training targets students and minors and provides them with possibilities to master their professional skills required to work in a given profession. Work placements target students who wish to apply and deepen their knowledge and skills in real working conditions. There is also a special apprenticeship scheme for adults registered as unemployed or jobseekers with local labour offices. The apprenticeship for adults helps them to obtain professional qualifications or skills.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

The main regulatory framework is provided by the following regulations:

- The Act of 14 December 2016 – The Education Law (Journal of Laws of 2020, item. 910)[149];
- The Regulation of the Minister for National Education of 22 February 2019 on practical vocational education (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 391)[150];
- The Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 May 1996 on the vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration (Journal of Laws of 2018, item. 2010 as amended)[151]; and
- The Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 11 April 2014.[152]

The first two legal documents apply to all apprenticeship schemes, but the regulations differ for young workers who are also students and apprentices and adults who participate in apprenticeship schemes.

3. History of apprenticeships

There have been different periods of VET development throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. During the inter-war period three types of schools were in place – schools preparing for the profession, vocational secondary schools (gymnasia), and vocational lyceums. In the communist period, VET was characterised by traditional teaching methods, poorly equipped school workshops and laboratories, graduates' lack of practical and teamwork skills. Most recently, the reform in 2012 was directed particularly at vocational and lifelong learning education. The sectoral VET reform launched in 2017 and introduced in 2019 aims to restore the status of vocational education and training by making it the first career choice.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Poland, there are four apprenticeship schemes.

- **Vocational preparation (Apprenticeship) of juvenile or young workers (*Przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych*)** provides practical training in the workplace, organised by an employer and based on an employment contract between an apprentice and an employer. Students of first-stage sectoral vocational schools spend 100% of the number of hours of practical training in the workplace. It is implemented at upper secondary level. In 2019, 113,478 students were enrolled in this scheme. Students have a status of apprentice.

[149] Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Prawo oświatowe, Dz. U. z 2019 r. poz. 1148 i 1078.
[150] Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 22 lutego 2019 r. w sprawie praktycznej nauki zawodu, Dz.U. 2019 poz. 391.
[151] Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 28 maja 1996 r. w sprawie przygotowania zawodowego młodocianych i ich wynagradzania, Dz.U. 1996 nr 60 poz. 278.
[152] The Act of 20 April 2004 on employment promotion and labour market institutions (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 1482), http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20040991001/U/D2004100
Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 11 kwietnia 2014 r. w sprawie przygotowania zawodowego dorosłych, Dz. U. 2014, poz. 497
http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20140000497

- **Vocational preparation (Apprenticeship) of adults (*Przygotowanie zawodowe dorosłych*)** is a special apprenticeship scheme for adults registered as unemployed or jobseeker with local labour offices. It has two formats: a longer form of apprenticeship for adults, which allows them to sit an exam to obtain a vocational qualifications; or a shorter form of apprenticeship for adults, which helps them to acquire selected vocational qualifications or skills. The apprenticeship for adults is organised by employers, often in cooperation with a training institution. It is implemented at upper secondary level and in 2019, 92 people participated in the scheme. Partcipants have a status of unemployed / jobseekers.

- **Student internships (*Staże uczniowskie*)** were recently created to allow students (who are not juvenile workers) to gain experience in the profession in which they were educated. This scheme gives partcipants an opportunity to study, undertake an apprenticeship and be remunerated for the apprenticeship. As of 1 September 2019, student internships apply to all students of technical secondary schools and stage I sectoral vocational schools who are not juvenile workers.
- **Practical vocational education (*Praktyczna nauka zawodu*)** is implemented as practical training in the workplace, organised by the school on the basis of a practical vocational education contract, concluded between the school principal and the employer. Practical vocational education can be considered as an apprenticeship scheme in Poland if students of technical upper secondary schools, stage II sectoral vocational schoola or post-secondary school, spend between 30% and 100% of the number of hours of practical training in the workplace.

5. Main developments since March 2018

On 22 November 2018, **amendments to Education Law** were adopted.[153] The main objective of these amendments were: (1) to improve the status of VET in Poland; (2) to adjust the new sectoral VET school system to the needs of modern economy and particular sectors/trades ("tailor-made" system); (3) to increase the employers' influence on the functioning of vocational education; (4) to change the core curriculum, organisation and law; and (5) promote sectoral VET schools among students and their parents. The proposed changes meet the expectations of employers and constitute specific instruments aimed at creating a stronger link between education and labour market.

On 25 January, 2019, the Council of Ministers adopted the general part of the **Integrated Skills Strategy (ISS)**. Its key element is to diagnose progress and challenges and define priorities related to the development of appropriate skills in Poland, activate skills resources on the labour market, promote the effective use of skills in economic and social life as well as strengthen the system of shaping and developing skills. Work is currently being done to prepare the detailed part of the ISS.

6. Overarching assessment

The overarching assessment focused on the vocational preparation (Apprenticeship) of juvenile or young workers (Przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych) scheme. In relation to this scheme, Poland had two criteria fully in place in 2018 – **Criterion 5: Pay / compensation and Criterion 7: Work, health and safety**. However, since then, they have made progress on other nine criteria, meaning that almost all of the EFQEA criteria are now at advanced level.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some

[153] Journal of Laws under the no. 2245

		changes are visible)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 6: Social protection	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)
Criterion 13: Transparency	Not in place at all	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Advanced stage of system/scheme change (changes are visible throughout the system/scheme)

More specifically**, support for companies (criterion 10), involvement of social partners (criterion 9) and career guidance and awareness raising (criterion 12)** have recorded the biggest improvements. Under criterion 10, the amount of co-financing for employers was raised, covering the occupations in demand (as indicated by the ministerial forecast). The 2019 vocational education reform, introduced the legal involvement and support of social partners (criterion 9). Under criterion 12**,** compulsory career guidance was implemented for all kindergarten students, primary and secondary school students and adult students.

Pedagogical support (criterion 3) and **Quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)** encountered some challenges in implementation. Encouraging trainers and mentors especially working with SMEs to follow additional courses in order to provide relevant training to apprentices have been the biggest challenge under criterion. The tracking of employment and career progression of the apprentices creates some issues under criterion 14.

Portugal

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeship/learning (*aprendizagem*) is understood as the lifelong process whereby knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired within the education, training, professional and personal contexts.[154] Apprentice (*formando*) is the term generally applied to individuals who attend this type of training.[155]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Portugal are regulated in the following national acts:

- Portaria (Ordinance) n.º 1497/2008
- Portaria (Ordinance) n.º 60-C/2015, 2 March, changed by Portarias (Ordinances) n.º 181-A/2015, 19 June, n.º 190-A/2015, 26 June and 148/2016, 23 May – Specific regulation in Human Capital Sphere regarding "Cursos de aprendizagem".

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have a long history in Portugal. Apprenticeship programmes (*Cursos de aprendizagem*) were implemented from 1980 to 1984 and the legal basis was introduced in 1984 with the Decree-Law (*Decreto-Lei*) n.º 102/84.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

In Portugal, there is one apprenticeship scheme, i.e. the so-called **apprenticeship (dual) system**, which is offered ininitial vocational education and training (IVET) to young people in alternation, facilitating both their entry into the labour market and to pursue further studies. Alternation refers to the interaction between theoretical and practical training (work-based learning) and the contexts in which they take place. Work-based learning (*formação pratica em contexto de trabalho*) is the development and acquisition of technical, relational and organisational knowledge and skills relevant to the responsible performance of a professional activity, based on quality standards and in compliance with safety and health rules. The emphasis given to the enterprise is mainly justified by the training potential of qualified professionals working there and the fact that learning is largely done in the workplace. The scheme was inspired by the French and the German dual systems, with an active engagement of social partners, corporations and employers' associations. It is implemented at upper secondary level. In 2018, 25,339 learners were enrolled in the scheme.

5. Main developments since March 2018

A first main development is the pilot project called **'Learning Gives Employment' (*Aprendizagem Dá Emprego*)**, which was launched in the tourism sector in 2019.[156] While the pilot project in tourism is still ongoing, it is expected to be rolled out across other sectors in the near future (e.g. automotive, construction, mineral resources, footwear and fashion, maritime, textiles, etc.). The pilot project introduces elements such as 50 hours of training tailored to each of the participating employers and commitment to employability of apprentices who successfully complete apprenticeship courses. The membership of the *Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional* (IEFP) in the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, led the IEFP to commit to increase the quality and attractiveness of apprenticeship courses, through the implementation of various measures, including the creation of the Network of Excellence Partners for Apprenticeships, the design and implementation of a campaign to promote apprenticeship courses,[157] the training of tutors who accompany young people in the workplace,[158] etc.

A second main development is the launching of an international public tender in June 2020 by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Training Education (ANQEP) on **"Acquisition of services for conducting diagnostic studies of qualifications and competences needs and updating of the national qualifications catalog (NCQ)"**, which aims to review the NCQ and redesign it in Results Learning Outcomes. Its review will have a strong impact on the future reforms that will need to be implemented.

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[154] Decreto-Lei (Decree-Law) n.º 14/2017 of 26 January 2017
[155] Decreto-Lei (Decree-Law) nº 242/88 of 7 July 1988.
[156] https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=95eb3d08-4160-4fd9-b8c9-a5a457cf3f58
[157] https://www.iefp.pt/geracao-pro
[158] Formação de Formadores e Tutores at: https://netforce.iefp.pt/

6. Overarching assessment

In 2018, ten of the fourteen criteria were already fully in place in Portugal, which reflects the long tradition of apprenticeships in the country.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Not in place at all	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

There have been some developments in relation to **learning outcomes (criterion 2)**. In June 2020, ANQEP launched an international public tender for the performance of sector diagnostic studies of skills needs and qualifications and for the design of training benchmarks and tools for the recognition, validation and certification of professional skills. Some training courses, especially in the tourism sector, have already integrated learning outcomes in their curricula.

In addition, **flexible pathways and mobility (criterion 11)** and **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)** have also improved their performances. Under Criterion 11, IEFP aims to fund the learners' international mobility in the 2021-2027 period. Quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14) was further strengthened by the 20 June 2020 decree law. This decree stipulates that professional schools must implement quality assurance systems of the training processes and the results obtained by their learners, as defined by the EQAVET Framework. However, there have been some challenges related to the implementation of the national quality assurance model. **Support for companies (criterion 10)** has not recorded any improvements as there is no financial support for companies and has remained the weakest criterion.

Romania

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Romania, continuing VET (also known as adult vocational training) is available for learners from age 16. As part of continuing VET, apprenticeship are defined as vocational training at the workplace that is conducted on the basis of an apprenticeship contract. The **apprenticeship at the workplace scheme** is only available in continuing VET and has been managed by the public employment service since 2005.

In initial VET provided at upper secondary level, the **dual VET scheme** is available. This is organised on the initiative of interested economic operators acting as potential employers and practice partners and it's regulated through a partnership contract between school, employer and municipality (local authority).

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

There is a separate legal basis for each of the two apprenticeship schemes existing in Romania:

1. The **Apprenticeship at the workplace scheme** in continuing VET is regulated by Law 279/2005[159], which was subsequently amended in 2011, in 2012, in 2013 (Law 179 / 2013), in 2017, in 2018 and in 2019 and by the Labour Code.
2. The **dual VET scheme** is regulated by the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 81/2016, endorsed by Law no. 82/2018[160].

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have a tradition of more than 85 years in Romania, while dual VET has only been implemented since 2017/2018, with elements of dual training in initial VET being introduced starting in 2013/2014.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There are two apprenticeship schemes in Romania. The first scheme, **'apprenticeship at the workplace' (*Ucenicia la locul de munca*)**, addresses people outside of formal education and training (at least 16 years of age, but no upper age limit). Under this scheme, the learner has the legal status of an apprentice. The apprenticeship programmes offered through this scheme can be organised for EQF level 1-4 qualifications. In 2019-30.11.2020, there were 9,023 enrolled learners in this scheme.

The second scheme, **'VET in dual system' (*Invatamant profesional in sistem dual*)**, offers only programmes at EQF level 3 providing the learner with a student status. The Law of education allows the organisation of dual IVET programmes for qualifications level 4 and 5 of the EQF, however, the methodologies to organise them are not yet elaborated. The number of enrolled learners in this scheme in 2019-2020 was 12,908.

5. Main developments since March 2018

The main development in relation to the **apprenticeship at the workplace scheme** relates to the modification of several normative acts[161][162][163] to provide the possibility to organise EQF level 1 qualification programmes in order to ensure access to apprenticeships for unemployed people who did not graduate from lower secondary education.

In addition to the developments related to the apprenticeship at the workplace scheme, **the dual IVET pathway was introduced** (2017/2018). Among upcoming reforms, the Ministry of Labour in partnership with the Ministry of Education is developing, as part of a project funded by European funds, an integrated mechanism for

[159] http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/MMJS/Legislatie/Munca/2018/20181207-Lege-279-2005_ucenicia_la_locul_munca.pdf
[160] https://static.anaf.ro/static/10/Anaf/legislatie/L_82_2018.pdf
[161] Government Decision no. 92/2018: http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/HG92-2018.pdf
[162] Order of the Minister of labour and social justice No. 2495/2018: https://mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/Munca_Legislatie/20122018_Ordin_2495-2018_Aprobare_lista_ocupatii_nivel1.pdf
[163] Ordinance No 96/2018 http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/OUG96-2018.pdf

anticipating skill needs, monitoring the insertion of graduates of education and training programs, evaluation and monitoring of public policies on active measures and training.

6. Overarching assessment

Given the long tradition of apprenticeships at the workplace in Romania, the majority of the EFQEA criteria were either already fully in place or to a large extent in place in March 2018. As such, no significant development took place since 2018. The assessment covers both apprenticeship schemes.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	No action taken

The most significant progress was registered with regards to implementing the **written contract (criterion 1)** as well as in developing a set of **learning outcomes (criterion 2)**. The existence of a partnership contract between the school, the employer and the municipality (local authority) is compulsory and has to be signed as a condition for the approval of each dual VET programme, while all IVET qualifications (dual VET included) are based on learning outcomes. However, the legislation introducing these criteria was introduced before 2018 and no action was taken recently.

There are also several criteria where Romania is experiencing implementation challenges, including for instance the **introduction of compulsory requirements for tutors (criterion 3)** to follow a specific programmes in order to develop specific skills, knowledge and competences in order to train students. There is also a **need to intensify the involvement of the social partners (criterion 9)** in apprenticeship schemes, and there currently are **no mechanisms in place to validate apprentices' prior learning (criterion 11)** and to take it into account for accessing apprenticeship programmes.

Slovakia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

The 2015 Act on VET[164] introduced 'dual VET' in Slovakia, providing work-based learning in companies based on contracts with individual learners. Following this reform, upper secondary VET is currently offered as: (1) school-based programmes with practical training (mainly) in school workshops; (2) a mixed scheme, with school-based learning alongside in-company training within the framework of school-company agreements (contracts); and (3) dual VET combining in-company training and school-based learning, where learners (or their parents) have contracts with enterprises for training, while companies and schools have agreements for VET theory provision. Learners have student (not employee) status. Curricula programming and certification are the remit of the VET school. Although no future job contract is explicitly envisaged by law, employment in the company (or at least in the sector) is expected. Some companies offer learners a pre-contract of future employment.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

There is no apprenticeship scheme in Slovakia. According to the national legislation, all initial VET learners are considered 'students'. This also applies to learners from the mixed scheme who receive part of their training in a company within the framework of a school-company contract and also to the dual VET.[165]

3. History of apprenticeships

Prior to 2015, the Slovak VET system was organised into two broad school-based VET programmes, i.e.: three-year secondary education programme (offered at ISCED level 3C), ending in a final exam resulting into what was called an 'apprenticeship' certificate; and the four-year secondary education with a vocational component (offered at ISCED level 3A), which resulted in a 'maturita' certificate. Learners in enrolled in the three-year and school-based VET programmes were traditionally called 'apprentices'. However, the term disappeared from legislation. Following the adoption of the VET Act in 2015, dual VET was introduced in Slovakia in the 2015/16 school year. There were 2,611 learners in this scheme at start of 2017/18, of which 1,252 in the first grade, 953 in the second grade and 406 in the third grade. In June 2018, the first 96 dual learners completed the dual VET programme.[166]

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There are no official apprenticeship schemes in Slovakia.

5. Main developments since March 2018

A first main development in Slovakia since March 2018 is the adoption of Act No. 209/2018 Coll. (June 2018),[167] **amending and supplementing the Vocational Education Act of 2015**. This enabled a more flexible setting of the dual education system, streamlining the entry of employers and especially small and medium-sized enterprises, including self-employed persons into the dual education system and flexible setting of educational content adapted to the specific needs of employers. Another key development was the **introduction of a lead in-company trainer** which allowed for a better coordination of VET provision and the organisation of practical training by employers. An important upcoming reform in 2021 is the in**troduction of a new evaluation of VET VET study fields**, which will focus on increasing competences for employers and regulating inter-company training.

[164] https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/61/20180901.html
[165] http://www.refernet.sk/images/news/files/2018_SK_CR_draft2018.pdf
[166] http://www.refernet.sk/images/news/files/2018_SK_CR_draft2018.pdf
[167] https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/61/20180901.html

Spain

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

In Spain, the term used for "apprenticeship" is "dual vocational education and training" and is defined by legislation as "training actions and initiatives, combining employment and training, that aim at workers' professional qualification in a regime that alternates work activity in a company and vocational education and training delivered by the education system or the employment system", (respectively the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Employment). The Dual VET scheme in Spain can be implemented through two sub-schemes: the "apprenticeship" contract in VET or in the employment system for occupational qualifications, where learners have the status of employees, and receive a salary; or through the "cooperation agreement" between a company, training centre and the learner, where the learners are not considered employees and they only receive a grant.[168]

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships in Spain are regulated by the Royal Decree 1529/2012 of November 8th on apprenticeships contracts,[169] which lays the foundations of the dual vocational training; the Order ESS/2518/2013 (modified by Order ESS/41/2015) which regulates aspects related to the school-based learning component that is mandatory to obtain the qualification; and the Autonomous Communities which further regulate dual vocational training in their territory.[170]

3. History of apprenticeships

From 2014, after the adoption of the Royal Decree 1529/2012, dual VET was progressively regulated and implemented in all autonomous communities in Spain. Since January 1st, 2016, all the training associated with the "apprenticeship" contract must necessarily be linked to VET programmes leading to formal qualifications awarded by either the education or employment authorities.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

17.0 There is one apprenticeship scheme in Spain, the **Apprenticeship in dual VET** (*Formación profesional dual*). This scheme, implemented in 2012, targets learners 15 years of age or about to turn 15. The scheme was developed based on the need to further promote the cooperation of companies with the qualifications and VET system by facilitating professional practical learning of learners in companies, and to promote young people's access to employment and training. The status of the learner can be that of student, trainee, or employee. According to statistics from the school year 2018-2019, 26,340 students were enrolled in Dual VET programmes.[171]

5. Main developments since March 2018

The first main development in Spain since March 2018 is the establishment of a **working group on dual VET** in January 2019.[172] The working group provided 50 recommendations to develop a coherent framework for the development of dual vocational training in the Spanish educational system. A second main development was a **2-year project to improve the quality of VET in Spain**. The project was developed with support of the Structural Reforms Support Service of the European Commission, and aimed to support the efforts of the Spanish regional authorities to define and implement appropriate processes, methods and data collection strategies, learning from regional and international good practices. Finally, in July 2020 the Spanish government adopted a **new Plan for the modernisation of VET**.[173] The main aims of this plan are to incorporate companies of each sector (SMEs and micro-SMEs included) into the VET ecosystem, to increase the duration of the compulsory on-the job-

[168] Royal Decree 1529/2012, of November 8, on the apprenticeships contracts and laying out the foundations of the dual vocational training system. Available at: https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2015/10/24/pdfs/BOE-A-2015-11431.pdf
[169] *Ibid.*
[170] Legislation has been introduced at national level creating dual VET and as such the scheme can be considered a mainstream model. However, different programmes based on this dual model have been implemented by each of the Autonomous Communities http://todofp.es/sobre-fp/informacion-general/formacion-profesional-dual/proyectos-fp-dual-espana.html
[171] Sourced from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training data
[172] The working groups included representatives from the Ministry of Education and VET (represented by INCUAL and by the Vice Directorate-General for Planning and Innovation in Vocational Training), the Ministry of Labour, the regional education administrations from 11 autonomous communities (out of 17, although all of them were invited to participate) and trade unions and companies.
[173] https://www.todofp.es/dam/jcr:5d43ab06-7cdf-4db6-a95c-b97b4a0e1b74/220720-plan-modernizacion-fp.pdf

training module in VET programmes, and to create a specific contract to qualify young early leavers from education and training (16 to 20 years of age).

6. Overarching assessment

18.0 The table below demonstrates that, in Spain, most of the EFQEA criteria were either somewhat or fully in place in March 2018. Only criterion 11 was highlighted as not being in place.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Somewhat in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Not in place at all	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

Most developments too place in relation to **criterion 7**, which is fully implemented in all autonomous regions. For **criterion 2**, it is important to note that there is always a learning agreement establishing the learning outcomes and their accomplishment is guaranteed by varied apprenticeship mechanisms. Additionally, relating to **criterion 4**, although the proportion of the work component varies across the regions, the workplace component represents at least 40% of the apprenticeship.

Implementation challenges persist in relation to **criterion 8**, as the level of detail of regulation at national level is currently insufficient. Spain therefore plans to adopt a new detailed regulatory framework. For what concerns **criterion 5**, as apprentice pay or compensation is not compulsory, this leads to a very heterogeneous implementation across the regions. Finally, there are challenges in relation to **criterion 14**, as quality assurance is not carried out in a systematic way, there is no clear responsibility for graduate tracking, and the statistical indicators used also need improvement

Slovenia

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is defined in as "a training pathway of upper-secondary vocational education and of continuous vocational education" (Apprenticeship Act, §1). An apprentice is understood as a being either a (regular) student enrolled in the apprenticeship pathway of upper-secondary vocational programmes, an unemployed part-time student, or an employed person studying with the aim of obtaining a vocational qualification, retraining or further vocational education (Apprenticeship Act, §5).

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships are regulated by the following national acts: the Apprenticeship Act adopted in 2017 (*Zakon o vajeništvu*, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 25/2017);[174] the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (*Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja*)[175]; and the Vocational Education Act (*Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju).*[176]

3. History of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have a recent history in Slovenia, as they were only introduced in 2017 as part of a ESF-funded pilot programme.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

There is one apprenticeship scheme in Slovenia, which was introduced in 2016 as part of the ESF-funded "Reform of upper-secondary vocational education" (*Prenova poklicnega izobraževanja*). The programme started in 2016 and had two aims: (1) to support and evaluate the pilot introduction of a new apprenticeship scheme, to be introduced in 2017; and (2) to test the individualisation model of vocational education. As of October 2020, 20 schools and 12 curricula are included in the scheme and approximately 236 students signed an apprenticeship contract (i.e. less than 3% of all upper-secondary vocational students). The decision concerning the full implementation of the apprenticeship scheme will be made after the evaluation of the pilot in 2021.

5. Main developments since March 2018

There have been two main developments concerning apprenticeships in Slovenia since March 2018. Firstly, through the aforementioned **Reform of upper-secondary vocational education**, which introduced apprenticeships in Slovenia. As aresult of this reform, in 2020 students in 20 schools had the opportunity to enter the apprenticeship scheme of 12 upper-secondary vocational programmes.

A second development includes the implementation of the "**Promotion of vocational education"** (*Promocija poklicnega izobraževanja*), which started in 2019 and included promotional campaigns in the media (through TV, radio, web, social networks, etc.), as well as a series of events organised by the Chamber of Craft and Small Business (OZS).[177]

Another important development is the "**Training of in-company trainers and incentives for employers**" (*Usposabljanje mentorjev v podjetjih ni spodbude delodajalcem*). This 24-hour initial training programme for trainers in companies was revised in 2016 to update the knowledge and competences required to plan, provide and assess workplace learning. Since 2016, the training programme has been available for free within the ESF project "Training mentors 2016-21" coordinated by Biotechnical Educational Centre Ljubljana (BIC) and School centre Kranj. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is stimulating companies take part in the training of upper-secondary vocational and higher vocational students. The incentives are co-financed by the ESF

[174] https://euagenda.eu/upload/publications/untitled-183938-ea.pdf
[175] http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO445
[176] http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4325
[177] https://www.mojaizbira.si/poklicizajutri, https://cekin.si/poklici-danes-za-jutri/poklici-danes-za-jutri-deficitarni-poklic-vescine.html(modal:p/mailing, https://www.google.com/search?q=poklici+danes+za+jutri&rlz=1C1CHBD_slSI887SI887&source=lnms&tbm=vid&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrhvGdy8rsAhXLGewKHagLC-4Q_AUoBHoECAUQBg&cshid=1603451808896392&biw=1680&bih=939

programme "Co-financing incentives for employers to provide work-based learning in educational programs leading to a vocational qualification". Incentives are meant for employers to provide on-the-job practical training of upper secondary vocational and short-cycle higher vocational students and apprentices. In 2018 and 2019, nearly 2,000 mentors completed the training programme; and in the school year 2018/2019, employers received financial incentives for 51 apprentices and in the school year 2019/2020 for 119 apprentices.

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, most of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place or to a large extent in place in Slovenia. However, many developments took place across a range of the criteria.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Somewhat in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)
Criterion 13: Transparency	To a large extent in place	(Some) discussions have started, but this did not lead to any new measures (yet)
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	To a large extent in place	Initial stage of system/scheme change (some changes are visible)

There are three criteria on which the most progress has been made. The first set of developments concerns **criterion 1**. In the new Apprenticeship Act of 2017 specifications with regards to written apprenticeship contract are prescribed and specified. Thus, every apprenticeship contract has to be verified by a competent chamber. The second set of developments relates to **criterion 2**. The new apprenticeship scheme learning outcomes of the in-company training are prepared by working groups composed by both employers and teachers, the objective of which is to define a list of work processes and generic competencies for in-company training summarised in a catalogue of practical training adopted by the Expert council for VET. Finally, important developments were also made in relation to **criterion 14**. Quality assurance takes place through VET schools' self-evaluation report, a verification of training companies, and a coordinator of in-company training.

Criteria on which Slovenia is experiencing implementation challenges include **criterion 5**, as there is low compensation for the apprentices training (work) in companies; **criterion 12**, as career guidance is not coordinated, apprenticeships are not systematically included; and **criterion 9**, as cooperation of social partners in qualification development, the role of social partners in apprenticeship governance, the role of trade unions are under-developed.

Sweden

1. Understanding of apprenticeships

19.0 The School Law (2010:800) outlines the following: "Within vocational programmes, there may be upper secondary school apprenticeship education, which can start in the first, second or third year of education. Upper secondary apprenticeship education shall take place at one or several workplaces".[178] There is one apprenticeship scheme within the regular education system in Sweden, with four officially distinct target groups, each having a separate official definition (and corresponding legal base): upper secondary school apprenticeships for youth; special needs upper secondary school apprenticeships; apprenticeships education for adults; and finally, apprenticeship education for adults with special needs.

2. Embedding of apprenticeships in national legislation

Apprenticeships are regulated by the following national acts:

- The Swedish Education Act School Law (2010:800) ;[179]
- Upper Secondary School Ordinance;[180]
- Adult Education Ordinance;[181]
- Act on Apprenticeship Employment;[182]
- Ordinance on state subsidy for regional adult VET;[183] and
- Ordinance on state subsidy for secondary apprentice education.[184]

3. History of apprenticeships

20.0 In the past, different types of apprenticeship schemes were tested and piloted within upper secondary education in Sweden. The current apprenticeship system was first piloted from 2008 to 2011, which contributed to the reforms introduced in 2011. In these reforms, apprenticeships became an alternative and parallel path to school-based vocational education at the upper secondary level.

4. Apprenticeship schemes

21.0 Sweden has one apprenticeship scheme, **Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3) (*Gymnasial lärlingsutbildning*).** After completion, apprentices receive a vocational qualification for upper secondary education. Within apprenticeships, at least half of the learning (for adult apprenticeships this is at least 70%) must take place at the workplace. In total, 12,941 learners were registered as apprentices during the autumn of 2018, and 13,377 were registered as apprentices during the spring of 2019. For special needs upper secondary schools, the number of apprenticeships amounted to 74. For adult education, in 2018, there were 3,579 apprentices within adult education (apprentices for which state subsidies are granted).

5. Main developments since March 2018

22.0 The first main development since March 2018 concerns the **introduction of tri-partite agreements** (between apprentice, employer and school) in 2018 in upper secondary education for pupils with intellectual disabilities, equivalent to the agreements that were introduced in 2011 for apprentices in upper secondary school. This resulted in increasing numbers of apprentices with approximately 60% between autumn 2018 and spring

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[178] Skollag (2010:800): http://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?bet=2010:800, article 11.
[179] Skollag (2010:800): http://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?bet=2010:800.
[180] Gymnasieförordning (2010:2039): http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/gymnasieforordning-20102039_sfs-2010-2039
[181] Förordning (2011:1108) om vuxenutbildning: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-20111108-om-vuxenutbildning_sfs-2011-1108
[182] Lag (2014:421) om gymnasial lärlingsanställning: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2014421-om-gymnasial-larlingsanstallning_sfs-2014-421
[183] Förordning (2016:937) om statsbidrag för regional yrkesinriktad vuxenutbildning: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2016937-om-statsbidrag-for-regional_sfs-2016-937
[184] Förordning (2012:992) om statsbidrag för arbetsplatsförlagt lärande i gymnasieskolan och gymnasiesärskolan: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2012992-om-statsbidrag-for_sfs-2012-992

2020. The second development concerns an **extra allowance to cover costs for meals and travels** for pupils without eligibility to national programmes in upper secondary education who are admitted to an Introduction Programme with apprenticeship education. Subsidies were introduced for employers and education providers who offer apprenticeship education for this target group. This resulted in increased numbers of apprentices in the target group (2,069 in spring 2020). The National Agency for Education supports **networking opportunities** for schools that train apprentices for adult education and for upper secondary school for pupils with intellectual disabilities (2020).

6. Overarching assessment

Already in March 2018, all but one of the EFQEA criteria were fully in place in Sweden. Only criterion 13 (transparency) was not yet in place, but no additional developments took place in relation to this criterion.

	State of play in March 2018	Developments
Criterion 1: Written contract / agreement	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 2: Learning outcomes	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 3: Pedagogical support	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 4: Workplace component	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 6: Social protection	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 10: Support for companies (cost-sharing arrangements)	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 12: Career guidance and awareness raising	Fully in place	No action taken
Criterion 13: Transparency	Somewhat in place	No action taken
Criterion 14: Quality assurance and graduate tracking	Fully in place	No action taken

A specific area where developments took place in recent years concerns **pedagogical support (criterion 3)**. Here, the National Agency for Education (NAE) organised conferences in 2019 and 2020 attracting more than 1,000 persons working on workplace-based learning. Also, the NAE started supporting the regions to establish networks aimed to increase quality and quantity of apprenticeships. In addition, developments took place in relation to **quality assurance and graduate tracking (criterion 14)**. The NAE is running an Erasmus+ project to define critical criteria for self-evaluation by VET-providers. Finally, developments took place to improve **career guidance and awareness raising (criterion 12)**. Apprenticeships are promoted as an attractive learning opportunity through information measures for a broad target group in particular adults.

Some implementation challenges still exist. These relate to firstly to **pay and/or compensation for apprentices (criterion 5)**. Since there is no tradition of remunerating apprentices, it is a major challenge to implement the relatively new concept of Upper Secondary Apprenticeship Employment (GLA), in which apprentices are remunerated. Apprentices do receive an allowance to cover food and travel costs (besides their general study aid). A second area facing challenges is **career guidance and awareness raising (criterion 12)**. In the last decade, there has been a negative trend in participation rates in VET programmes in Sweden. The NAE is working to counteract negative stereotypes and change attitudes around this. Furthermore, in order to increase the number of adult apprentices, Sweden is looking to start one or more national adult apprenticeship networks. A final area in need of further improvement is the **involvement of social partners (criterion 9)**. In order to

align VET education to local needs, local programme councils should be established to facilitate local/regional dialogue between the school and representatives from working life. These councils could help to create a close and cooperative approach between school organisers and stakeholders. How these councils are organised and what tasks they should perform is not regulated.