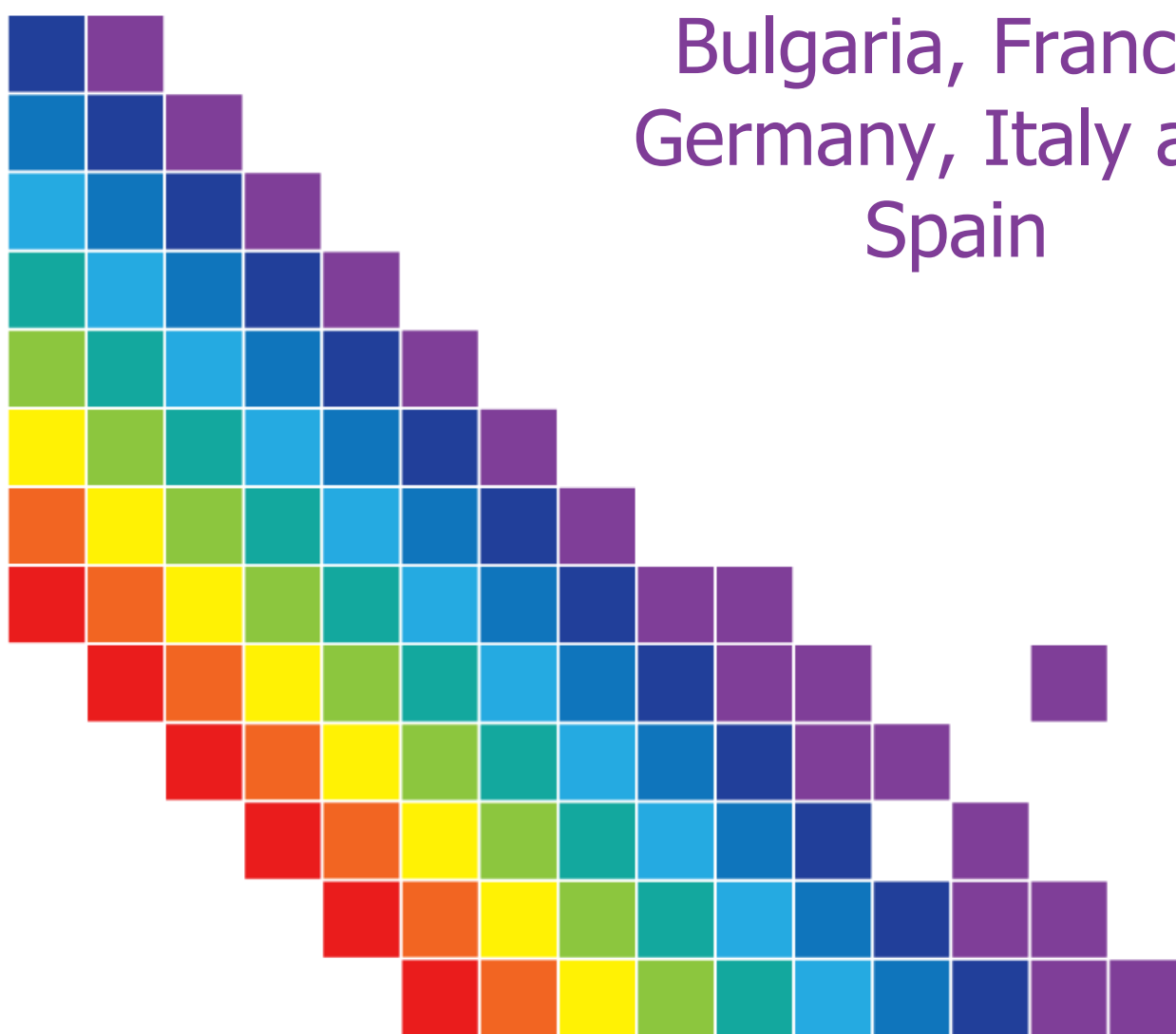




# Dual Education & Work Based Education

Best Practices from  
Bulgaria, France,  
Germany, Italy and  
Spain





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## 1. Bulgaria

### Summary

In the most developed European countries, the dual training system has proven to be a key tool for providing qualified specialists who go directly from the training institution to the labour market and contribute to economic growth and higher employment. In this system, the leading partner of the training institution is the private sector, which not only invests in its future personnel, but also shares the responsibility for the quality of vocational training.

In Bulgaria, the dual education system has been implemented since 2015, through pilot projects that aim to test this type of training and, based on the experience gained, to proceed to a wider implementation of this system in the country. In addition to secondary school students, it is also applicable to adult learners in licensed centres.

### Introduction

The Law of 2015 on Pre-school and School Education [1] covers only upper-secondary dual education and complements the Vocational Education and Training Act. Art. 115 defines work-based learning (dual education) as a specific form of education in which the vocational qualification is acquired through

- a) practical training in a real working environment
- and
- b) education in a vocational school.

Work-based learning may be organised by the vocational school on the basis of a partnership with one or more employers. In addition, work-based learning is organised in vocational schools for students who have reached the age of 16 and are in the second stage of upper secondary education. The training leads to 2nd or 3rd level professional qualifications (EQF level 4). Upon completion, the diploma for the training gives access to tertiary education. Work-based learning is defined in the same way in the Vocational Education and Training Act.

Dual training is also offered in vocational training centres at post-secondary non-tertiary level. It is initial or continuous training leading to a first, second or third level of vocational qualification (EQF 2-4). The training is completed with a certificate of acquired vocational qualification at a certain level.

After the amendments in legislation in 2014 introducing dual education and training, partnerships between schools and companies have been established to start offering dual vocational training.

[1] This law was adopted in 2015 and entered into force in August 2016, State Gazette No. 79/2015 <http://www.mon.bg/?h=downloadFile&fileId=8245>

### Legal framework

Training through work (dual system of training) is organized and carried out in accordance with the Law on Vocational Education and Training (VET). According to the Ministry of Education, this is one of the forms of vocational training that is organized on the basis of Parstvo – an institution in the system of professional education and training (VET) or - Secondary School, Profiled Gymnasium or Spiritual School.



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The Law for Professional Education and Training (LPET) introduces another feature in the dual education system - the commissions for conducting the exam for acquiring a professional qualification. In addition to representatives of the training institution, the employers and the workers, they must also include a representative of the employer-partner in the dual system / art. 35, par. 1 of LPET /.

- ✓ The Codex on labor (KT)

The Labor Code regulates the conditions for concluding an employment contract (l. 230 KT). This is a training contract, with which the employer undertakes to train the worker or employee in the process of work in a certain specialty, and the worker or employee - to master it. Unlike other types of training contracts, with training contracts in the dual system, such a contract can be concluded more than once with one employer. The training contract for the dual system determines the form, place and duration of the training, as well as other issues related to the implementation of the training. In the case of the dual system, the duration of the training is determined according to the plans regulating how the training is carried out.

- ✓ Regulation No. 1 dated 08/09/2015 on the terms and conditions for conducting training through work (dual system of training)

Training program for mentors to acquire basic pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills when working with students to implement learning through work (dual system of learning) was approved by Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. RD 09-997 from 02/04/2019.

- ✓ Regulation No. RD-04-4 of November 8, 2019 on the terms and conditions for creating and maintaining an information database of employers who meet the requirements for participation in partnerships for the implementation of training through work (dual system of training).

### Regulations for employers

An employer who wants to become a partner in the Dual Education Partnership must meet the following requirements:

1. A registration as a sole trader or legal entity under the Commercial Act, the Cooperatives Act or the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act or to be a person registered under the legislation of a member state of the European Union, of another state party to the Agreement on the European Economic space, or of Switzerland.
2. He must not have declared bankruptcy, not be involved in bankruptcy proceedings or not be involved in liquidation proceedings.
3. He should not have any obligations for public state receivables, with the exception of obligations under acts that have not entered into force, as well as rescheduled, deferred or secured obligations.
4. He should not have been convicted of an intentional crime of a general nature - applies to the employer, to the person representing him, as well as to the members of management and supervisory bodies and to other persons who have the authority to exercise control over the decision-making of these bodies.
5. He should have the necessary material base for carrying out training in the practice of the profession in accordance with the state educational standard for acquiring a qualification in the profession.
6. He should have workers or employees who meet the requirements for training pos. 17a1, para. 2.



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7. There should not be any violation established by an effective criminal decree or court decision, related to work without a written employment contract or without handing over the employment contract to workers or employees, with the accrual and payment of labor remuneration within the terms set by law, with the employment of underage workers and employees and with the employment of illegally staying foreigners.
8. It should be assured that there was no violation of the Law on Health and Safety at Work in the preceding three-year period established by an effective criminal decree.

### Requirements for mentors in a dual form of education

1. To have a professional qualification in the profession in which training is carried out.
2. To have at least 3 years of proven professional experience in the same profession.
3. To have undergone training for mentors (the financing of the training is carried out with funds provided by the person being trained as a mentor, by the employer, by the employer and the training institution, or with funds from national programs and projects, from European funds and from other sources).

### Obligations on the mentors

1. To assist in the development and updating of web-based Practical Training Programs.
2. To implement the curricula for conducting the training.
3. To develop visual materials necessary for training.
4. To familiarize each trainee with the company's internal rules for conducting practical training through work and conduct briefings on the rules for ensuring health and safety at work according to Ordinance No. RD-07-2 of 2009. On the terms and conditions for the conduct of periodic training and briefing of workers and employees on the rules for ensuring health and safety at work (SG, No. 102 of 2009).
5. To support the adaptation of each trainee in the working environment.
6. To organize the workplace for each trainee with the necessary technical and technological documentation, tools, machines, devices, equipment and materials for the safe implementation of practical training.
7. To demonstrate individual elements of the work process.
8. To supervise the fulfillment of the assigned tasks, give practical advice during the shift and help the quality.
9. To fill in the diary for practical training grades.
10. To keep in touch with the educational institution through the designated teacher-methodologist.

### Pilot projects

For the implementation of the regulations for dual education, two pilot projects were implemented: "Domino" (2015-2019) and "Support for the dual education system" (2020-2023).



### Project "Domino"

A pilot project called "Domino" (2015-2019) has been launched, which aimed to introduce dual training in Bulgaria based on the Swiss model. The project was implemented within the Bulgarian-Swiss cooperation programme and was carried out jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science. It was supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Economy.

Dual education has a positive impact on vocational education development in Bulgaria – this is the key conclusion from the survey among vocational schools and companies commissioned by the DOMINO Project. Schools and companies are committed to continue participating in dual education, as well as to collaborate in the future. Despite positive results dual education in Bulgaria still faces numerous difficulties and obstacles for both, business and schools. These challenges are elements of a larger concern about the development of vocational education in Bulgaria.

The survey conducted by Gallup International consists of quantitative research (June-July 2019) among 104 companies and 31 schools under the DOMINO Project and 502 companies and 153 schools not participating in DOMINO and also four focus groups with students from vocational schools and their parents. The survey was carried out with the financial support of the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Programme at the end of the DOMINO Project. Under DOMINO nearly 1,600 students from 32 vocational schools across the country in 19 cities are learning in dual method (studying through working) in 12 professional occupations and gain working experience in more than 170 Bulgarian and foreign companies. The project supports Bulgaria in developing its model of dual education based on the experience of Switzerland, one of the world's countries with the lowest level of youth unemployment. The long Bulgarian traditions in vocational education are also helpful in the process of implementing the dual educational method.

Collaboration at local level in the development of dual education is perceived positive by both, business and vocational schools. The DOMINO participants share large scales of satisfaction from the employers (students) and educational system at a local level: 61% of the companies and 84% of the schools assess the cooperation between them as "very good".

Practical guidelines for dual education were elaborated by DOMINO project (<http://dominoproject.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Practical-Guidelines-eng.pdf>)

### Project "Support for the dual education system"

The project "Support for the dual education system" started on 02/03/2020 for 36 months with a deadline no later than 10/31/2023. The project has a total value of BGN 24,425,618.58 and is financed under the Operational Program "Science and Education for Intelligent Growth", co-financed by the European Social Fund.

The implementation of the project "Support for the dual education system" is expected to help to increase the compliance of vocational education and training with the labour market and to create opportunities to increase the qualifications of the future workforce in professions key to the country's economy. The activities should help the development of the dual education system and are expected to enable a close connection between the education system and the real needs of the labour market.

The target groups of the project include 9,800 students from 147 vocational high schools and schools with vocational training classes, vocational training teachers in the





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secondary vocational education and training system, representatives of enterprises, parents.

The project supports actions to increase the attractiveness of the dual education system for students and parents to raise awareness in enterprises. Students in the first stage of upper secondary education are encouraged to participate in the dual system by being involved in a "trial internship" in the partner company. Part of the activities is aimed at improving the skills of teachers and trainers, and at acquiring pedagogical and methodological skills of mentors from partner companies. In this way, various components related to the quality of vocational education are comprehensively covered, including educational content, educational environment in schools, well-prepared and motivated pedagogical specialists. The creation of conditions for ensuring additional financial support for students during the educational process will reduce the social factor as a reason for dropping out of school, and this is a very important national policy that will be supported by the project. formation and development of the dual education system.

This project is undergoing and we still do not have information on the tangible results.

### Conclusion

The dual form of training aims to support the improvement of the quality of vocational education and training by providing opportunities to acquire practical experience and improve the practical skills of trainees in accordance with the needs of the labour market and to facilitate the transition from educational institutions to the workplace place. It helps to increase the successful implementation of the labour market, to encourage the building of stable partnerships between training institutions and businesses, as well as to increase the incentives to participate in practical training in a real work environment.

The implementation of dual education contributes to providing prerequisites for updating both the curricula as a whole and the taught disciplines, courses and topics according to business needs, as well as supporting the creation of sustainable mechanisms and opportunities for employers to select employees who have proven skills in a real work environment.

In Bulgaria, the regulations for implementation of the dual education system were established in 2015 and two consecutive project were financed. The conclusion of the pilot projects are optimistic but despite positive results, dual education in Bulgaria still faces numerous difficulties and obstacles for both, business and schools. These challenges are elements of a larger concern about the development of vocational education in Bulgaria.



## 2. France

In France **Alternance** is a training system, which is based on a practical phase and a theoretical phase, which alternate. It is a real bridge for employment and professional integration.

Two types of contracts exist: the **apprenticeship contract** and the **professionalization contract**, which both meet the same objective of improving the employee's skills by combining work in a company and theoretical training within a VET organisation.

The terms of execution of these contracts differ in particular concerning the duration of the contract, the duration of the training and the associated remuneration. The apprenticeship contract relates only to initial training while the professionalization contract is relevant for continuous training.

- Apprenticeship contract:
  - The apprenticeship contract is applicable for young people aged 16 to 25. The employing entity can be companies in craft, commercial, industrial, agricultural sector as well as associations and liberal professions. Employers in the non-industrial and commercial public sector (state, territorial and hospital public services, as well as public administrative establishments) are also eligible.
  - The purpose of the apprenticeship contract is to obtain a State diploma (CAP, BAC, BTS, License, Master, etc.) or a title for professional purposes registered in the national directory of professional certifications (RNCP), all of which professional titles under the Ministry of Labour.
- Professionalisation contract:
  - The professionalization contract is applicable for young people aged 16 to 25, job seekers aged 26 and over, beneficiaries of the minimum active solidarity income (RSA), the specific solidarity allowance (ASS) or the allowance for disabled adults (AAH). Any entity that is subject to funding for continuing vocational training is eligible.
  - The purpose of the professionalization contract is to acquire a recognized professional qualification (a diploma or professional title registered in the National Directory of Professional Certifications – RNCP); a professional qualification certificate (CQP); a qualification recognized in the classifications of a national collective agreement.

For the trained person, alternance is a way to design a complete professional project thanks to a diploma or qualifying training and concrete experience in a company. Through this training scheme, the trained person can benefit from free training costs, putting theoretical lessons into practice, be paid, during his/her training as an employee, get easier access to employment, thanks to the professional experience acquired in the company.

Recruiting a work-study student has many advantages for a company, such as training a future employee, teaching him a job, integrating him into the life and culture of the company.

In addition, financial benefits are offered to the employer, who recruits on a work-study basis.



As part of the apprenticeship contract, the apprentice receives remuneration that varies according to his/her age; in addition, his/her remuneration increases with each new year of performance of his/her contract. The minimum wage received by the apprentice corresponds to a percentage of the Minimum salary (SMIC).

The work-study student is a full-fledged employee. As such, the laws, regulations and collective agreement of the professional branch and that of the company are applicable to him/her under the same conditions as to other employees.

Working time is identical to that of other employees. The employer must allow the work-study student to follow professional theoretical courses with the VET organisations. The VET training time is included in the actual working time.

The success of the alternance relies on three actors (employer, student, training body) with well-established responsibilities.

More information about French **Alternance** training system this link:

<https://www.alternance.emploi.gouv.fr/decouvrir-lalternance>

### 3. Germany

In Germany, one of the main features of the worldwide recognised dual system in vocational education and training is the cooperation between mainly small and medium-sized enterprises on the one hand and publicly funded vocational schools on the other. Usually the training lasts two to three and a half years and is regulated by law. Trainees in the dual system spend part of the week in a vocational school and the other part in a company (or longer periods in both).

About 50 percent of all school-leavers undergo vocational training provided by companies, which consider the dual system the best way to acquire skilled staff.

Standardisation of training, testing and certificates in all sectors nationwide ensures that all trainees receive the same training regardless of region or company.

Due to cultural sovereignty, the education systems of the federal states differ slightly. In Germany, there is ten years of compulsory full-time schooling, which begins at the age of 5 or 6, depending on the federal state. Those who do not attend a full-time general or vocational school after these ten years are subject to compulsory part-time vocational schooling until the age of eighteen or for the duration of their training in the dual system.

#### **Initial VET**

Graduates with the secondary education leaving certificate can choose full-time vocational schools leading to a state certified occupation, general education programmes with vocational orientation or dual apprenticeship programmes.

The model of dual apprenticeship dominates the German VET system in terms of the number of learners and provides the entry to recognized training occupations. Apprenticeship is open to anyone having finished compulsory education and having a contract with a training company. Pre-vocational training measures are available for young people that did not succeed in finding a training company to start an apprenticeship or are in need of upgrading their knowledge and competences.

The full-time vocational school system encompasses the VET programmes outside the dual apprenticeship system, which are regulated by other federal or federal



state laws. Such occupations are, for example, occupations in the health and social services sector or the so-called assistant occupations.

Another option is programmes that combine general upper secondary and vocationally oriented education, usually leading to a university entrance qualification.

### **Formal continuing vocational education and training (CVET)**

CVET in Germany is characterised by a broad range of offers and functions as an open market. For VET graduates nationally regulated further training qualifications are available, e.g. the “Meister (master craftsperson)” (EQF 6) and qualifications issued by the chambers. Both are based on the Vocational Training Act and the Trade and Crafts Code. The qualifications are mostly mapped on EQF-levels 5-7.

The trade and technical schools of the Federal States also offer state recognized VET qualifications at a higher level, e.g. to become a technician (EQF 6). Most further training qualifications and certificates of trade and technical schools enable access to university.

### **International attractiveness of high quality training**

Together with the relevant ministries from countries, which also have a dual system (Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Denmark), Germany has launched an online “Apprenticeship Toolbox” to provide support for decision-makers throughout Europe, who want to implement the key principles of dual apprenticeship schemes (<http://www.apprenticeship-toolbox.eu/>). The development of high-quality vocational education and training is also the guiding principle of bilateral cooperation under the Berlin Memorandum of December 2013 with Greece, Portugal, Italy, Slovakia and Latvia.

More information about German training system at these links:

1. <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/en/education/the-german-vocational-training-system/bmbf/en/education/recognition-of-foreign-professional-qualifications/recognition-of-foreign-professional-qualifications.html;jsessionid=38306A7E24AC8FD22BD6CEB5D289D82C.live722>
2. <https://www.apprenticeship-toolbox.eu/germany/education-system-and-vet-system-in-germany/142-education-system-and-vet-system>

## **4. Italy**

In accordance with European strategies for employability, which detain a long history, Italy is also committed to reducing the trend of dropout from the education system. The much-pursued high rate of young people’s inclusion in the labour market is strictly connected to a good quality of the education system (including vocational education and training) and its ability to keep young people until they are properly trained. Since 2014, the labour market (L 183/2014 – D. Lgs. 81/2015) and education system **Italian reforms** (L. 107/2015 – D. Lgs 61/2017) promoted the inclusion in the labour market of young people and/or unemployed adults through the improvement of the education and vocational training systems quality, the process of recognition of skills, the adaptation of curricula and the introduction and the



development of **work-based learning programs**, including **dual learning** and **apprenticeship systems**.

As highlighted by Cedefop (*"Skill shortages and gaps in European enterprises"*, 2015), increasing unemployment rate goes hand in hand with the difficulty on the enterprises side to find suitable professional profiles. This lack derives also from an inconsistent dialogue between the education system and the labour market. There is the need to build a stronger connection, and the education system has to implement a learning methodology that lays its foundation on a tighter relationship with the labour market. The education system must be brought into the labour market, and vice versa, overcoming the long-lasting issues which sees the both of them as two separated entities. The active exchange allows enterprises to express their needs directly to the education system which could therefore shape learning programs according to the actual demands of the economy and society. At the same time, students have the opportunity to experience the world outside the education system, to build bridges and to be more prepared once they enter the labour market.

Nowadays, Italy is moving toward a dual learning system, much inspired by the established experience of other European countries, such as Germany. There is the effort to create a homogeneous framework, even though it must be pointed out how the Italian landscape is still fragmented. This is also due to the jurisdiction system, which recognizes to the Regions exclusive legislative powers regarding vocational education and training.

### **Allotment of legislative authority**

With the Constitutional Law n.3/2001, the Italian Constitution underwent a reform of its 5<sup>th</sup> Title, laying down rules on Regions, Provinces and Municipalities. The cited Law established a new and different allocation of regulatory powers among State, Regions and Local Authorities. With particular regards to labour, vocational training and education, the State maintains an exclusive legislative authority concerning "general norms and education", but Regions acquire a concurrent legislative power with respect to "occupational safety and security" and "education, save the autonomy of educational institutions".

**Regions are recognized with exclusive legislative powers with regards to vocational education and training**, respecting the fundamental legislative principles established at National level.

### **Dual Education and Work Based Education in Italy**

The "dual" learning model is based on alternation between training sessions in the classroom (at an educational institution) and moments of practical training in working contexts (at an enterprise/organization). This model promotes the transition between



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the two worlds. The already cited Italian reforms in the field of labour market and education system, introduced in addition to the formal VET courses, the VET courses in dual mode, also for school courses and tertiary education.

Within the entire vocational training chain (including Higher Technical Education and Training, Higher Technical Institute) and the secondary education channel (high schools, technical institutes and professional institutes), qualifications can also be acquired through a dual training modality, such as the apprenticeship contract.

The dual system was introduced in Italy through the Agreement in State – Regions Conference on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2015. The system came into operation with the allocation of stable resources required by law n. 205/2017 (Budget Act). With this system, the possibility has therefore opened up to obtain secondary education qualifications of the second cycle, both upper secondary education and VET.

At the moment, the Italian dual system can be implemented through three different means:

1. Strengthened alternation
2. Simulated training enterprise
3. Dual apprenticeship

### STRENGTHENED ALTERNATION

It is a learning methodology that involves training sessions in the classroom and periods of learning through work experience within a host organization. This activity foresees at least **400 annual hours**. Students from the second cycle of education, aged **between 15 and 18 years old**, can request to undertake the alternation. The tailored learning paths have a flexible structure, and they alternate learning periods within the classroom, and learning periods based on job experiences which are planned, evaluated and implemented under the responsibility of the educational institution. In order to activate the alternation, the educational institution and the hosting organization must submit an **agreement**, detailing every aspect of the learning project.

The objectives of the alternation are usually related to the possibility of:

- implement **flexible learning methods** that systematically link classroom training with practical experience;
- **enrich the training** acquired in school and training courses with the acquisition of skills that can also be spent in the labour market;
- encourage the **professional orientation** of young people to enhance their personal vocations, interests and individual learning styles;
- to create an organic **link** between school and training institutions with the world of work and civil society;
- correlating the training offer to the cultural, social and economic development of the **territory**.



Within an alternation project, the young person **legally remains a student**: the placement in the company does not constitute a working relationship. The relationship between educational institution and the hosting company is regulated through the Agreement, while the relationship between student and hosting company is regulated with a **Learning Agreement**.

If on the one side the educational institution is the responsible subject for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the alternation, on the other side the hosting organization has to fulfil some obligation:

- identification of the company tutor;
- signing of the agreement with the educational institution and selection of students;
- registration to the National Register of school-work alternation (established at the Chambers of Commerce);
- co-planning of the course with the educational institution and signing of the training agreement with the student;
- organization and management of the experience of alternation and training for students on specific company risks, in compliance with internal procedures.

Host organizations benefit from **tax incentives**.

At this historical moment, Strengthened Alternation in Italy still has to face some major issues. On the hosting company side, the Italian productive compartment is characterized by a constellation of small enterprises which are not able or do not have the resources to provide the appropriate training support to students. In most cases, enterprises are also hard to reach, and teachers/trainers do not have time and tools to search for companies that are able to host students. Furthermore, educational institutions cannot count on a solid basis of previous experiences and good practices, since this training methodology is still quite recent in Italy.

### **SIMULATED TRAINING ENTERPRISE (STE)**

It is a learning methodology implemented through the creation of a virtual enterprise developed and managed by the students. They provide service and/or products referring to a real business. The culture underlying the STE is identified with the culture of **entrepreneurship and responsibility**.

In the context of VET, each student must accomplish at least **400 annual hours**, and they can participate in the STE from the age of **14 years old** (while alternation and first level apprenticeship require them to be at least 15). The STE is a valid tool to acquire knowledge and competences, and guides students towards problem solving, learning by doing, cooperative learning and role playing. The STE, understood as a way of training in the workplace, **recreates a productive reality** within a school (or training) institution, but able to function in the market, and it can combine both learning in real situations and the actual management of a business organization.



Unlike alternation and apprenticeship, however, the STE is less institutionalized, a circumstance which, if it makes the implementation rather easy, makes the assessment of the system compliance more difficult.

The STE is not yet a consolidated reality, indeed it is evoked in the literature in a semantic context that is not without ambiguity and oscillations. Even in Italy, the Simulated Training Enterprise does not have an unambiguous definition. Nonetheless, it represents a great opportunity for VET providers committed to experimenting with the Italian way to the dual system. In this phase it is therefore necessary to tolerate a plurality of meanings that refer to multiple experiences.

The Simulated Training Enterprise also absolves the common problematic related to a shortage of real business available to host students with other kinds of training experience (alternation, apprenticeship). As already mentioned, a great percentage of Italian businesses are too small, or lack competence and human resources, in order to be a suitable partner with educational institutions.

### DUAL APPRENTICESHIP

The Dual Apprenticeship is nowadays a privileged form of employment of young people in the labour market since it gives the opportunity to gain practical professional experience, but also to obtain the qualification. It is a form of Work based education. Apprenticeship plays a primary role in increasing employability, even in sectors with a high technological and innovative content. The contractual statute makes it possible to implement a virtuous method that integrates education, training and work.

The Apprenticeship is regulated at national level by the D. Lgs. 81/2015, even though the training component is disciplined by each Region. It is a real **permanent employment contract** connotated by the "**mixed cause**", meaning the contract foresees both working and training activities.

In the Italian framework, Dual Apprenticeship can be identified with three different typologies:

- **First level apprenticeship**
- **Second level apprenticeship**
- **Third level apprenticeship**

The *first level apprenticeship* is finalized to obtain professional qualification, professional diploma, upper secondary education diploma and the higher technical specialization certificate. Young people between 15 and 25 years old can be employed with this kind of contract. The duration may vary from 6 months to 4 years, with the possibility to extend it for further 12 months, depending on the situation. The external training (carried out by the training institution) is mandatory, and the percentage on the total duration may vary between 50% and 70%. The employer is exempt from any pay obligation for the hours of external training; for the hours of internal training (provided by the employer), the student is paid a salary equal to 10% of that which





would have been due for the job. Furthermore, the employer can benefit from **tax incentives**.

*Second level apprenticeship.* It is a professional apprenticeship, aimed at obtaining a professional qualification in contractual terms, and therefore it does not fall into the dual system.

*Third level apprenticeship* can be activated in all professional sectors and can be stipulated between employers and young people with an upper secondary education qualification, aged between 18 and 29.

Legislative Decree 81/2015 prefigures different purposes for Level III apprenticeships, namely:

- apprenticeships for the attainment of a higher/university tertiary education qualification, such as higher technical diplomas concluding Higher Technical Education courses, high artistic and musical training diplomas, academic education qualifications (bachelors, masters, research doctorates, etc);
- apprenticeships for research activities, linked to research projects;
- apprenticeships that can be activated for the planned and mandatory internship, for the purposes of professional qualification in regulated professions.

Just like first level apprenticeship, third level apprenticeship foresees external and internal training and the employer is exempt from any obligation to pay for the hours of training carried out in the training institution; for the hours of training paid for by the employer, the student is paid 10% of what he/she would be due for the job.

### **Good Practices. Strengthened Alternation and Simulated Training Enterprise**

#### **STRENGTHENED ALTERNATION**

##### **The Friulian case**

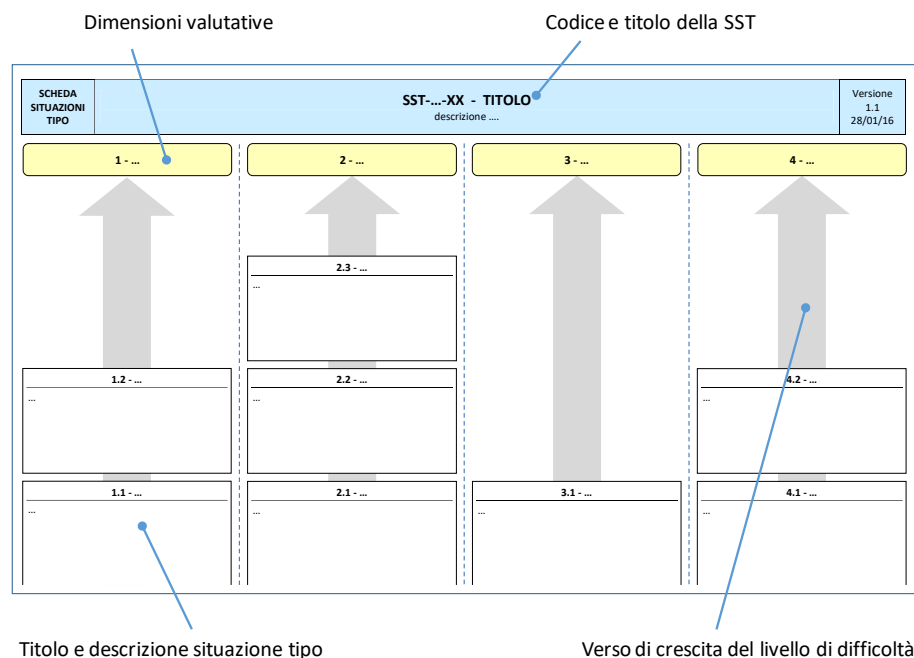
As already mentioned above, Regions are recognized with exclusive legislative powers with regards to vocational education and training. Therefore, the implementation of successful Alternation projects within the VET system is strictly related to the regional organizational policies and agreements.

Thanks to a system that has been proven highly valuable, the relations between Friulian VET institutions and hosting organizations (private, public, etc.) can count on a reliable reference framework, called "*SST – Schede Situazioni Tipo*", Standard Situations Sheets.

The **Standard Situation Sheets (SST)** are the reference tool for assessing the skills acquired by the student during the work experience period and for planning the training provided directly in the organization. Their application in Alternation designing



has set qualitative standards to evaluate the acquisition of skills and abilities during the work-based experience. VET and hosting organization can rely on a common language that leads to the benefit of the student (and the agreement parties themselves).



SST are characterised by the following elements:

- The evaluative dimensions: by exercising a competence the learner produces certain products/services that are catalogued in separate columns.
- Typical situations: they describe work situations in which the competence is usually applied, and are classified on the basis of reference context, products/services produced, activities envisaged, tools required, techniques applied, materials used, etc.
- The position of a typical situation: in each column the typical situation is positioned according to an increasing level of difficulty from bottom to top.

### Competence-based programming model

In each SST form the typical situations, which are part of the course programme, are identifiable by the presence of a bar used for evaluation (N - B - I - A).

All situations that are part of the course programme include the possible involvement of the learner in the production cycle.

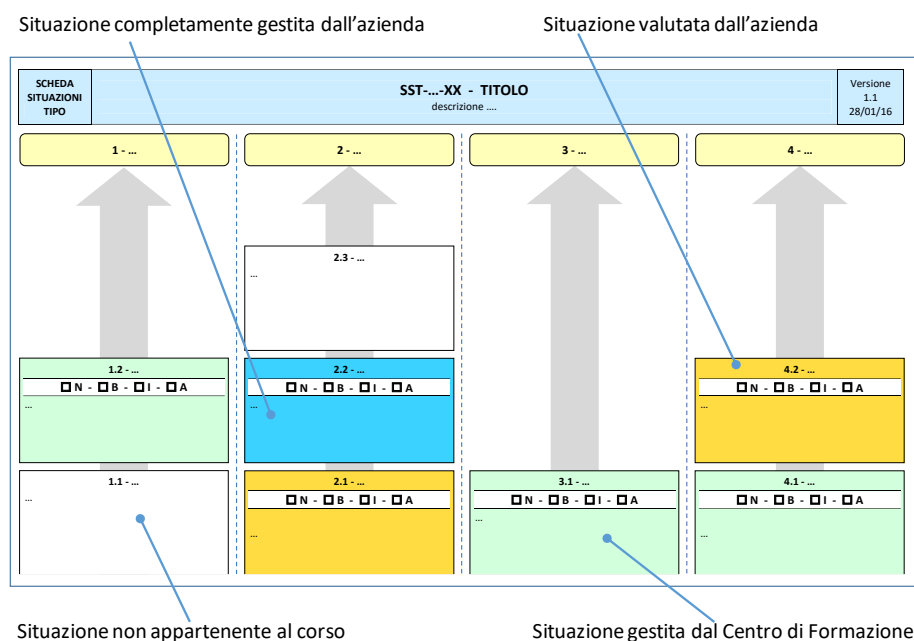
There is also a colour that specifies:

- Green: the situation is mainly handled by the training centre; however, it can be evaluated by the company.



## Dual Education & Work Based Education

- Yellow: the situation foresees the active participation of the company in the assessment phase
- Light blue: in addition to the assessment phase, the company is also asked to carry out the training part, i.e. to provide the trainee with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out the situation
- White: these are situations that are not part of the course programme (no assessment bar); they can however be carried out by the trainee



### Skills assessment system

The company tutor, by observing the student during the execution of the tasks, records directly on the SST form the level of competence demonstrated in compliance with the schedule agreed with the training tutor.

- Each SST form attached refers to a competence; ONLY the yellow and blue situations should be completed.

- For the completed situations, the tutor fills in the evaluation bar, by ticking the box which best expresses the student's ability:

N = inadequate. He/She was not able to handle the situation adequately, not completing the assigned task.

B = basic level. He/She managed the situation with a barely acceptable result, showing some uncertainty in the execution process (e.g. asked for support in carrying out some activities) not meeting the tasks' terms (e.g. took too long).



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I = intermediate. He/She has managed the situation achieving a fully acceptable result, carrying out the work with confidence and without help and respecting the tasks' terms.

A = advanced. He/She has achieved an optimal result, demonstrating effectiveness and efficiency in the execution process (e.g. no waste of raw materials) and optimising compliance with the tasks' terms (e.g. took less time than expected).

### Evaluation of other aspects

The "Evaluation of the in-company experience" sheet summarises the other aspects of the trainee's experience (e.g. his/her attitude and working style) and an overall assessment of whether or not he/she is ready to enter the labour market.

The SST system can be qualified as a good practice since it allows all involved parties to use a common language that will result in the possibility to give a clear assessment to the student. In order to achieve goals, acquiring skills and knowledge, the student must count on the capability of the educational institution and the hosting company to activate a productive dialogue, based on a specific framework language.

## SIMULATED TRAINING ENTERPRISE (STE)

IAL FVG has implemented a series of successful Simulated Training Enterprise experiences to offer its students the chance to practically apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom to the actual job market. Regardless of the type of activity, IAL FVG could always build strong partnerships with important economic actors of the regional territory, still ongoing. This is certainly a contributing factor to the success of these kinds of work-based education activities carried out so far. Even though the examples listed below refer to wellness, services to the person and catering areas, the same structure can be efficiently implemented for work based educational activities in the field of microelectronics.

What	"Harry's Bar"
Where	Piazza Unità d'Italia, Trieste
Beneficiaries	IAL FVG, Hospitality and catering training students
Partnership	"Harry's Bar"
The Project	<p>IAL students had the chance to manage Harry's Bar, which is a very trendy attraction, located in a centralized and most lively part of the city. Coordinated and supervised by their tutors and trainers, the students implemented all the necessary activities for the operation of the bar. Students learnt in the field how to work as a team, to manage the café even in stressful situations. Those were skills they could not acquire in the classroom, but only discover in a real situation, dealing with actual customers.</p> <p>The Simulated Training Enterprise followed a methodologic learning model based on the acquisition of fruitful skills. The activities, carefully designed on the students' needs, were aimed at:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- facing different situations of daily and professional life using the skills acquired during the training in classroom and by enforcing knowledge, personal skills and abilities;</li> <li>- progressively increasing autonomy and responsibility;</li> <li>- self-assessing the acquired skills and understanding the aspects that needed to be further developed.</li> </ul> <p>The Simulated Training Enterprise carried out at Harry's Bar gave the opportunity to develop products and services asked from real stakeholders, external from IAL FVG. These relations required a careful planning of the entire activities' cycle, which can be summarized as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and organising the activity. During this phase, students acquired all the necessary information to carry out all the Bar's management activities;</li> <li>- Realisation of the service. The variables that were taken into consideration were: estimated expenditures, raw materials to be purchased, resources and equipment needed, etc. In this phase the students were divided into groups which carried out different tasks. The whole activity was supervised by trainers, i.e. the laboratory teacher;</li> <li>- Evaluation and assessment. The assessment was carried out during the implementation of the activities and at the end of the project. Teachers/tutors filled out evaluation forms and students were also required to provide some feedback regarding their experience.</li> </ul> <p>This kind of work-based education experience was also aimed at developing a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. Specifically, growth opportunities for students included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the possibility of enhancing the autonomy, responsibility and collaboration among peers;</li> <li>- the tidiness of work spaces and the observance of hygiene and safety rules;</li> <li>- the appropriate use of personal protective equipment and clothing functional to the activity;</li> <li>- compliance with the delivery times for assigned tasks;</li> <li>- the relational ability to solve conflicts within the work group.</li> </ul>
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What	Management of Temporary shop
Where	Città Fiera Mall, Udine
Beneficiaries	IAL FVG, Sale staff training students
Partnership	Città Fiera Mall



The project	<p>IAL FVG established a fruitful partnership with Città Fiera, a mall near Udine's city centre. In order to give students from the Sale staff training course the chance to practical experience the skills acquired within the classroom, a Temporary shop was set up and trusted to a group of students. The project was carried out by IAL FVG with the support and active collaboration of other shops within the mall.</p> <p>The experience was aimed at consolidating and developing the skills of professional profiles in the commercial sector.</p> <p>The goal was to help the transition from a laboratory and guidance teaching environment to a real commercial activity, able to operate autonomously on the market, in order to give a breakthrough to youth unemployment in the area.</p> <p>The training needs addressed by the project referred to opening an access to the job market, self-esteem, empowerment, technical and personal autonomy, teamwork, entrepreneurship education.</p> <p>The reference practices were those of a real working activity. A very important feature was the possibility to create a commercial relationship with the clients: the students had to develop social skills but they also had to manage the economic transactions. Teaching practices such as learning by doing, situated learning and peer learning among students were used.</p> <p>In order to support students in the management of the temporary shop, the activity was promoted, and supervised by the enterprises' representatives: they collaborated with the course trainers and provided for some training and guidance activities dedicated to getting to know students and defining individual professional profiles.</p>
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What	Management of Beauty salon
Where	Friuli Venezia Giulia Region
Beneficiaries	IAL FVG, Technician of aesthetic services training students
Partnership	Confartigianato
The project	<p>Thanks to the partnership with Confartigianato, IAL FVG was able to activate several work-based education experiences throughout the region. The project was called "<i>Negozio chiavi in mano</i>" ("Turnkey shop"). Students from the Technician of aesthetic services class were able to gain practical experience in some Beauty salons in the Region. They took the place of the salons' entrepreneurs and they had to deal with all tasks connected to the job, such as appointment planning, services, purchase of materials, etc.</p> <p>The students were confronted with the same problems that entrepreneurs have to face, and therefore they were allowed to</p>



	<p>acquire not only theoretical knowledge, but also skills, to develop proactive attitudes and a planning mentality.</p> <p>The management of a company, albeit supervised, required students to experiment not only in the technical-practical skills associated with the creation and supply of the service, but also pushed them to deal with administrative management, the organization of a group, the ability to analyse a context and to dialogue with different subjects in addition to teachers/trainers and their peers.</p> <p>This work-based experience made it possible for students to organize and strategically plan activities, acquire some tools to identify and propose ideas for promotion of the service, and to test their entrepreneurial skills. Most importantly, students had the possibility to establish relationships with real clients. Therefore, developing social and commercial skills.</p> <p>The main innovative element of this experience can be found in the fact that, while remaining in a protected environment, students had the opportunity to experience a real business activity, developing entrepreneurial skills in addition to technical ones. Furthermore, this activity was highly interdisciplinary: material cost analysis, IT and communication, practical activities, etc.</p> <p>The overall evaluation took place through guided self-evaluation at the end of the experience. There were moments of reflection and evaluation of the activities carried out in the presence of students, teachers and with the participation of the entrepreneurs of the beauty salon.</p>
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What	Catering for International conference
Where	Gorizia
Beneficiaries	IAL FVG s Hospitality and catering training students
Partnership	University of Gorizia
The project	<p>Thanks to the partnership with the University of Gorizia, IAL students were asked to manage the catering of a one-week international conference at a Hotel in the city. The project involved students from the cooking and waitering courses. Provided with all the necessary information, the students had a few months prior to the international conference to organize the event with the support of their teachers/trainers. As the event schedule foresaw three meals a day plus coffee breaks, students had to plan working shifts, both in the kitchen and in the dining room; they had to define a menu, considering also different dietary requirements, and plan the purchasing of the raw material.</p> <p>This work-based education project was focused on the dynamic and practical aspects of learning, and made it possible to develop and</p>



	strengthen certain transversal skills and abilities (ability to work in a team, ability to communicate effectively, ability to observe and listen, flexibility, adaptation, responsibility, organisational methods, time/space/activity management, problem solving skills) that are particularly appreciated by the job market and are now considered necessary for personal fulfilment, social integration and employment.
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### Insights for reflection

#### FIRST LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP

The Italian scenario leads the VET system, job market and policy makers to a **joint reconsideration** of first level apprenticeship. As already explained above, this kind of work-based education gives the opportunity to obtain professional qualification, professional diploma, upper secondary education diploma and the higher technical specialization certificate. From a theoretical perspective this kind of apprenticeship is certainly a strong tool both for education as well as for the acquisition of skills on the field, but on the other side numbers and statistics speak differently.

First level apprenticeship could be an **efficient means** to combat unemployment among young people. Italy is in fact facing important issues, being one of the European countries with the highest rate of youth unemployment: 30,3% of young people between 15-24 years old are unemployed (source: Istat, October 2020), while the European average is 18%. To this worrying number, it must be added the NEET percentage: 23,7% of youngsters between 15-29 years old (corresponding to 2 millions) while the European average is 12,8% (source: OECD). Moreover, Italy is one of the European countries with the highest number of school dropouts.

Even though there are laws aimed at encouraging the implementation of first level apprenticeship, Italian companies are still resistant to adopt it and to welcome young people with this kind of work contract. Large companies are the most available, but Italian economy is mainly made up of very small and small companies. Even considering practical complications due to the lack of experience, shortage of human resources that could tutor young people, the main obstacle is of a **cultural nature**. Unlike other countries such as Germany, where education and work walk hand in hand on the same path, in Italy there is a clear division between the two systems, which rarely dialogue in a systematic and strategic way.

Comparing the three different kinds of apprenticeships in Italy, second level type (professionalizing) is by far the most implemented (around 95% of all apprenticeships). First level apprenticeship only produces a few thousand work contracts per year. A really scarce number, if compared to the 500 thousand existing contracts in Germany, an example of excellence in this field. It is estimated that nowadays 400 thousand youngsters could be employed and finish their education





thanks to first level apprenticeship contract, but unfortunately this goal is still a long way off.

The European Commission is encouraging its implementation: it is estimated that an increase of only one percentage point of apprenticeships produces a 0,95% increase in the youth employment rate and a 0,8% reduction in the unemployment rate.

It can be affirmed that Italy has undertaken the path to dual education, and first level apprenticeship is without any doubt one of the forms. All involved subjects should make a common effort to overcome difficulties considering all the benefits that can be generated.

From the hosting company point of view:

- **Increased productivity.** Employers hiring those taking part in first-level apprenticeships claim that these employees need less training, their performance is better and their skills greater than those possessed by other "recruited" people;
- **Impact on the selection process.** Employers can understand if the participants possess the necessary characteristics to carry out the job;
- **Possibility of responding to the skills deficit.** The first level apprenticeship can be used as an effective strategy to respond to the problem of skills' inadequacy and to ensure the availability of competent workers through investment in the future workforce.

From the learner point of view:

- **Specialist skills, technical skills and tacit knowledge.** The first level apprenticeship represents an effective method for the development of professionalism, skills and competences relevant to a particular profession or a specific workplace.
- **Transversal skills, competences and attitudes.** Technical skills alone are no longer considered sufficient in the current job market. First level apprenticeship has the potential to develop learners' self-esteem and self-efficacy as they are given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, complete assigned tasks and solve problems within a specific work context.
- **Socialization and motivation.** First level apprenticeship, in addition to facilitating the acquisition of technical and professional skills, is also able to provide the conditions to promote socialization within the working environment.
- **Facilitate the school-to-work transition.** Preparing young people and students for the job market through real work experiences improves their employment opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurship development.**

## Conclusion



Italy has laid the foundation to implement an efficient Dual education system. From a legislative point of view, important progress has been carried out during the past decade. The weak points that slow down this process are mostly of a cultural origin. The country is still characterized by a clear division between the educational system and the job market. It is necessary to consolidate an active dialog among all parties, considering first of all the real needs of young people, to prevent them from dropping out of school and allowing them to easily enter the job market. Furthermore, these experiences would certainly help in tackling the prejudice that define VET attendees as second-class students. If systematically adopted, all kinds of dual education and work-based education forms could also be the means to map skills and professional figures needs of the Italian job market, responding to the lack of appropriately skilled professional figures.

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## 5. Spain

### Spanish Dual Vocational Training and Contract for Training And Learning

Dual vocational training is the set of training actions and initiatives, mixed employment and training, whose purpose is the professional qualification of workers in a regime of alternating work activity in a company with the training activity received within the



## Dual Education & Work Based Education

framework of the system. professional deformation for employment or the educational system.

The modalities are multiple:

- Exclusive in the training center.
- With company participation.
- In the company and in the training center.
- Shared between the center and the affiliated company.
- Exclusive in the accredited company.

In the labour scene, dual vocational training in the vocational training for employment system will materialize through the training and apprenticeship contract.

### **Labour aspects**

Intended for people over 16 and under 25 who lack recognized professional qualifications to sign an internship contract. No maximum age limit for people with disabilities and social exclusion.

Minimum duration of 1 year and maximum of 3. By collective agreement it may be between 6 months and 3 years.

The salary will be the one established in the collective agreement, and never less than the minimum interprofessional salary in proportion to the effective working time.

The effective working time, compatible with that dedicated to training activities, may not exceed 75% during the first year, or 85% during the second and third, of the maximum working day provided for in the agreement or legally established.

The worker will be protected for all contingencies, protectable situations and benefits, including unemployment.

### **Training Aspects**

The training activity inherent to the contract will be the one necessary to obtain a professional training title, certificate of professionalism, academic certification, or cumulative partial accreditation, and must be related to the work activity carried out in the job.

The participating centers are the public and private centers accredited by the labour administration to provide training for Certificates of Professionalism, and the public and private concerted centers authorized by the educational administration to provide Vocational Training Titles. Also, the centers public and private integrated centers, the National Reference Centers and the companies for their workers that meet the accreditation or authorization requirements.

Reductions in Social Security contributions: 100% in business when the company's workforce is less than 250 people or 75% if it is equal to or greater than 250 people; 100% in the quotas of the contracted worker.

Discounts for training: companies will be able to discount the cost of the training received by the workers, as well as for the tutoring hours of the company tutor, with a limit of 40 hours per month.

Once its maximum duration has been exhausted, if it becomes indefinite, companies will be entitled to a reduction in Social Security contributions of €1,500 per year for the first three years, and €1,800 in the case of women.



### **Co-financing of the European Social Fund**

The reductions of the Social Security contributions described may be co-financed by the FSE.

### **In the educational field**

Dual professional training in the educational system will be carried out through:

A collaboration agreement between the participating centers and the companies in the corresponding sector with the possibility of having scholarships or grants.

Through a contract for Training and Apprenticeship, with training in Regulated Vocational Training.

### **Purposes**

- Increase the number of people who can obtain a post-compulsory secondary education degree through vocational training.
- Achieve greater motivation in students, reducing early school leaving.
- Facilitate labour insertion, by being in greater contact with companies.
- Increase the linkage and co-responsibility of the business fabric with professional training.
- Strengthen the relationship between vocational training teachers and companies in the sector and favor the transfer of knowledge.
- Obtain qualitative and quantitative data that allow decision-making to improve professional training.

### **Official recognition of training**

The contracted worker who has completed the training provided for in the contract, with a positive evaluation, may receive the Vocational Training Title or the Certificate of Professionalism from the competent Public Administration, and/or the educational certification of the modules completed of the Degrees or the partial accreditation cumulative, when this training corresponds to one or several modules of the Certificates of professionalism.

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