

# Newsletter

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## Successful completion of Online Survey

In Germany, everybody is happy with the Dual System. In Italy, all companies want financial compensation to host students for internships. In Malta, schools are still detached from the world of work. And in Bulgaria, schools and companies drown in paper-work...

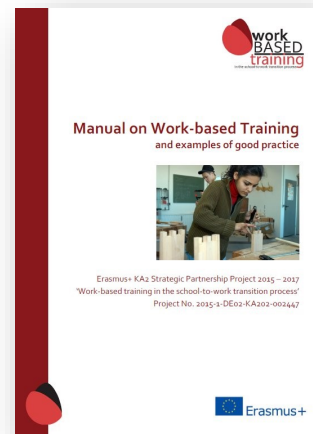
These statements are often heard when it comes to compare school-to-work transition in Europe and when arguing about the best way to prepare young people for their future job and to integrate into the world of work. However, are these statements really true? Do they correspond to the reality? The Erasmus+ project Work-based Training (WBT) wanted to get to the bottom of the question how to arrange best a smooth transition from school to work and interviewed teachers, trainers and young students in an online survey in nine European countries on their perception on school-to-work transition and work-based learning approaches. 562 participants took part in the survey and the evaluation lead to some interesting results – some were expected, others most surprising.

The survey also invited the participants to make proposals on how to improve the transition process they are facing and how to develop work-based learning approaches further. It was great to see how serious participants of all three groups took the appeal. Thus, hundreds of significant and valuable proposals from different point of views were collected.

You can find the results of the online survey together with numerous statistics and diagrams in a **Report on Findings** published on the project

website <http://www.workbasedtraining.eu/en/outcomes/>.

Currently, the partnership consortium intensely works on the production of a **Manual on Work-based Training** which summarizes all the findings made in the online survey, reports the proposals for improvement and draws conclusions regarding the further development of the school-to-work transition in the specific countries. Furthermore, the Manual will provide numerous examples of good practice of work-based training approaches. After completion in July 2017, the Manual will be ready for download as well.



A first summary of findings drawn in the nine countries you can find on the following pages. We also invite you to have a closer look by visiting our project website and getting in contact with us. We do hope that these documents finds your interest.

PS: In order to increase the readability we were using the male notation, certainly not to meant to neglect our female participants.



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# Main Findings of the Survey on Work-based Training



## BULGARIA

In Bulgaria, we were surprised by the different perception of the target groups (teachers, trainers and students) concerning the presence of career guidance staff within the organizations. But young people need somebody in their environment, who is able to give advice on labour market matters. Worrying is the fact that 71% of the students indicated that problems, which occurred during the workplace experience were related to the colleagues, the nature of the work they had to do and the punctuality. This indicates insufficiently developed and acquired "soft" skills, which are the key to a successful future career of every young person. Most students (57%) consider learning in the workplace quite important for getting prepared for the labour market and a specific job, but at the same time 90% of them find the time spent on practice learning in the school completely enough. All this proves that it is good to have the dual system of vocational education in Bulgaria in a preparatory phase and implemented in pilot sites during the 2015-2016-2017 school years. Also, we were surprised by the high rate of satisfaction with the WBT approach in Bulgaria: 71% of the teachers, 75% of the trainers and 95% of the students agree to it.



## GERMANY

As a result of our survey in Germany, we expected a general discontent about the flow of communication between the main stakeholders of the WBL process, namely schools and companies. In fact, these expectations were approved by various comments of teachers, trainers as well as students made when asked about their recommendations how to improve the process. Furthermore, from the trainer's side we expected complaints regarding the level of knowledge students bring along when realizing an internship or apprenticeship in a company. In fact, this assumption was not approved by the survey. 60% of trainers regard the knowledge of students as sufficient and even 85% are convinced that students bring added value to the company.

On the other side, we were surprised by the high level of discontent expressed by teachers regarding the WBT approach in Germany. Whereas more than two third the of interviewed trainers and also students express satisfaction with the school-to-work system as it currently is in Germany, only 57% of the teachers do so. Astonishing also was the fact that teachers on the one hand dispose of a general knowledge about work-based training methods (87%), but seem to be only poorly actively involved in the planning and implementation of WBT activities. Also surprising was the complete different perception of teachers and students regarding the guidance and support in times of internships. Whereas 53% of the students complain that they don't feel supported by the school, 92% of the teachers state that they attend the practical learning phases and are well informed

about the results of the internship. And absolute enjoyable was to see that there is such a high number of trainers who regard hosting interns as an advantage for the company .



## ITALY

The findings of the Italian surveys revealed different perceptions and criticalities of the system, some of them expected while some others not. A general discontent on the information and communication flow was expected and confirmed: teachers generally asked for more meetings and a better collaboration with companies; trainers wished a better interaction with schools or, more in detail, requested a better specification about the technical and personal competencies of the students; students expressed the need for a better dialogue with teachers. The communication does not only concern the planning and the implementation of the internship but also its conclusion: results and evaluation are the main topics, with 60% of the teachers not sufficiently aware of the internship results and some requests for more homogeneity in internship evaluation.

On the other side, some data surprised us. Considering all the complains/suggestions expressed mainly by teachers but also by trainers and students, we would expect a lower level of satisfaction, but 88% of teachers, 90% of trainers and 70% of students were sufficiently up to highly satisfied with the current system. Students, the target group with the lowest level of satisfaction, mainly concentrate their proposals on longer internships and a higher amount of practical trainings and proper information. Also, the companies' request for compulsory trainings on safety, run by the school before internship, was not expected. Another unexpected result is some teachers' attempt (not only Italians) to get a broader view of the issue: some reflect on the capabilities of autonomously thinking and making decisions as something really relevant for students both for their individual development and for their future job carrier, and some other by mentioning the importance of soft skills.



## MALTA

It appears, from the survey carried out in Malta that the transition is smooth for most young Maltese people in that they do not appear to have particular problems settling down at work. Apart from these general good results, we expected to find (a) an existing memorandum of cooperation between the parts involved in work based training activities, (b) a better connection between schools and companies, (c) a deeper involvement of in-company tutors or employers in facilitating the learners' transition from school to work.

On the other side, we were surprised to see that the overall view showed that the majority of teachers, trainers and students are satisfied with the WBT approach in Malta. Surprising also that 96% of teachers just as much trainers declared

that there is a designated person in their institution or company who is responsible for career guidance of students and for giving advice on labour market issues. It seems that there is an increasing willingness on both sides to provide support throughout all systems of guidance and counselling within the different institutions/companies with the aim of helping young people to get prepared for the world of work. Although it appears that the transition is smooth for most young people, one must also ensure that they are well guided and counselled when making their choices. It is not only a question of getting used to work but that young persons are working within the full potential of their capabilities. Besides, the survey has surprisingly highlighted the degree of detachment that still exists between schools and the world of work. A greater effort must be made in order to bring these two worlds closer. Initiatives must be taken in order to give students more work experience while they are still on training. The role of employers in the process also has to be greater one.



## PORTUGAL

As a result of our survey in Portugal, we expected some critical comments from the three groups (teachers, trainers and students) regarding the duration of the work-based training units, which are generally considered too short. These expectations were approved by the suggestions given by the teachers as well as the students indicating that not only should there be more work-based training experiences but they also should be longer. As regards the trainers, their answers showed little discontent concerning the duration of the WBT process since the majority (65%) considered that duration of the internship is appropriate to reach the goal of the curriculum. This result is really surprising since it is not consistent with the teachers and students' opinion.

We were pleasantly surprised with the high number of teachers who are using other activities to prepare students for the labour market. Also, we were also positively surprised by the fact that 35% of the trainers don't consider that it is essential for them to receive a financial compensation to host an intern, which leads us to conclude that the simple fact of hosting a student in the framework of a WBT experience is, in itself, rewarding and enriching for the companies. This is in line with the answers given when they were asked whether hosting interns is an advantage for the company (95% answered positively).

Absolutely enjoyable was to see that all the students observed an increase of their motivation to learn further. Moreover, they all agreed that through work experience they received a clear picture of their future job career.



## ROMANIA

In Romania, we have expected the survey to picture the reality of the transition process from school to work and to get a clear view of how satisfied students, teachers and trainers feel about the work-based training approach in our country. What was really surprising is the fact that 100% of the trainers without exception, 95% of the teachers and 92% of the students are content with the training system. The results are very optimistic and positive, although when asked about suggestions and improvements in connection with the work-based learning process, they had various proposals.

We were also impressed by the huge percent of teachers who practice work-based methods in their classes (90%). Teachers emphasized the huge importance practical lessons and activities have in students' preparation and they are involved in a wide variety of WBL related activities. On the other hand, we did not expect that trainers consider that schools take into account their feedback (100%). This proves that communication works between trainers and schools.

Regarding the soft skills, more than half of the trainers consider them as equally important compared to technical skills, which is surprising as we expected them to state that technical skills are more important than the soft ones. So, in order to get good and efficient technical training, it is of utmost importance to know how to behave in a team, to be punctual, to be communicative. Regarding the students, the majority of them (88%) have answered that they prefer the practical part of learning in the workplace; they eagerly take part in practical activities, students are aware of the fact that being well-trained involves much practice. Despite the overall optimistic answers we got from the respondents, they are all aware that the work-based training system in Romania still needs serious improvement and there are some common suggestions which should be seriously taken into account.



## SLOVENIA

In Slovenia, we expected general disappointment over the education process itself and the results of it. We have been caught by surprise how evident the disappointment is within all three groups, especially among employers who have expressed the need for greater significance of practical education. Surprisingly, even young learners distinctly notice this need and indicate that the lack of practical education leads to problems on the labour market later on. Among teachers, we predicted a persuasion that their knowledge transfer is good enough to integrate young people to the labour market and their future job. The results of the survey revealed the opposite opinion. Teachers also want more practical work phases and strive for the support of employers in the process. Also as expected, there was a general complain about the big gap between the real situation and the equipment conditions at schools. Both, pupils and teachers, mostly indicated the same problem. Moreover, employers are facing daily with this situation when students come to their companies for learning reasons. On the other hand, we did not really expect significant contributions from the students. However, the students showed a strong interest in their education and the problems they face. In addition, they proposed better cooperation between the school and employers and suggested to reward employers for their engagement so that there will be more opportunities for practical education. Among teachers, we did not expect the call for more practical skills and less theoretical learning contents. In addition, we expected even less the aversion against acquiring practical skills abroad! Despite the fact that employers have very little time, they have genuinely devoted themselves to the survey and highlighted many problems. Besides the will of a greater extent of practical education by the employers, there was among the most important propositions also the willingness to a better cooperation between the school and the employer, as well as an improved flow of information between both of them.



## SWEDEN

In Sweden, the survey revealed that teachers have good knowledge about and feel well involved in the WBL process. However, an unexpectedly large part of the responders (25%) does not agree that WBL/WBT is a very good method for learning. A relatively large amount of the tutors (25%) think that they receive too little information and support before and during the WBL-process. A positive response is that they find the students quite knowledgeable when they come to the workplace for their WBL-activities, and that they really contribute to the work. The students believe in WBL/WBT, and that it is important for their future working skills. They express satisfaction regarding the tutors in the work place and feel well integrated in the working team. The experience gives them a good picture about their future occupation. One surprise throughout the complete study is that all groups - teachers, trainers and students - have a remarkable vague view and knowledge about the existing guidance staff and activities in the schools, which is something that all would benefit from.

Summing up the most common tips for improvements, the following could be stated: - Closer and more constant contact and exchange between school and the industry in the nearby region. - Better planning/consultation between the tutor and the teacher. - More detailed trainings of tutors with periodic follow-ups through frequent visits by teachers to the work places. - To have the student more "hands on" than "just looking". - Well-attended programme committees with a clear focus on the student.



## TURKEY

As a result of the WBT survey conducted in Turkey, it has been determined that all stakeholders are highly satisfied with the performance of the on-the-job training in the country. 95% of the workplace trainers and 75% of the teachers and students are at the forefront of the on-the-job training approach in Turkey. 85% of students realize that the practical training they are doing is important for their future work and feel themselves as part of the workplace during the WBT experience. 75% of the trainers stated that the knowledge of the students is sufficient for on-the-job training. This ratio is lower than expected for student qualifications. While all the teachers state that WBT is useful, only 80% of them have knowledge about planning and evaluating WBT experiences constitutes the most remarkable point of the research. The remaining 20% is of considerable importance.

According to the teachers, while teachers are expected to provide more career guidance to the students participating in on-the-job training, 55% of the teachers in the school are providing carrier guide. 25% of the instructors at the workplace are doing this career guide as well. Particularly the educators' expectations for professional career guidance are far below expectation, and the indifference in this issue has an adverse effect on the transition from school to work.

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## THE PROJECT CONSORTIUM

Educational institutions from 9 European countries are working together:

**Zentrum für Integration und Bildung / Germany**



[www.zib-online.net](http://www.zib-online.net)

**Anziani e non solo / Italy**

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[www.afyonmerkezeml.meb.k12.tr](http://www.afyonmerkezeml.meb.k12.tr)

Learn more about the project and get involved under [www.workbasedtraining.eu](http://www.workbasedtraining.eu)

The screenshot shows the website interface for the work-based training project. It features the project logo, the Erasmus+ logo, and a navigation menu with 'PROJECT', 'ACTIVITIES', 'OUTCOMES', and 'THE PARTNERS'. A main image shows a young man working on a machine. Below the image, there is a news item titled 'WBT is on line!' dated October 16, 2015, and a section for 'UPCOMING EVENTS' listing a seminar on November 19 and another on November 23.

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