

Munich Economic Summit

Friday, 4 May 2012

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Panel 3 · Dual Education: Europe's Secret Recipe?

- Compared to the other European countries Germany has a very low youth unemployment rate (8.5 %).
- One of the reasons is apparently the dual VET system.
- In this system employers have a high responsibility as major actor in the education process. This gives them the possibility to qualify their future personal according to their needs but also according to national standards.
- In Germany qualification and examination standards are legally defined nationwide for about 350 training professions.
- Young persons having completed an apprenticeship can apply for jobs nationwide and employers know what they can expect.
- The dual VET system is also the basis for many further training qualifications. The most famous is the "Meister" in the craft sector.
- Employers in Germany invest a high amount of money in the initial VET system - about 24 billion Euros each year (additional 28.6 billion in further training).

- They do not see training as a mere cost factor but rather as an investment in the company's future.
- For employers in Germany the dual VET system is the main source for skilled workers/personal. They conclude more than half a million training contracts for young people leaving school each year.
- In times of demographic change and lack of skilled personal it is crucial for employers attracting talents to the company in a very early stage.
- The offer of a high quality apprenticeship-contract is a good way to find (and hold) talents for the future.
- During two or three years of training employers have time to get to know their apprentices and their competences (knowledge, skills, but also social competences).
- After successful completion of the apprenticeship the employer can offer them immediately a job (if available).
- For employers that means less recruiting costs and less job training. They can build on the persons they qualified in their own company that are already acquainted with the company's surroundings and special needs/processes.
- One of the success factors of the system is that employers and trade unions are the main actors when training standards are designed and reviewed. Without the consensus of social partners the ministry will not recognize a new or modernised qualification.
- This involvement of social partners guarantees that the training professions meet the need of the labour market and apprentices can be sure that with their qualification they are fit for a job.

- VET-schools play an important role in the dual system as equal partner of companies. They provide more general and theoretical aspects of knowledge and skills complementary to the company's training schedule.
- Training in companies and lessons in VET-schools need to be compatible and complement each other.
- VET schools also provide further general education (mathematics, reading, writing, languages). That means apprentices do not have only a vocational education but also improve their general education.
- Therefore cooperation of companies and VET-schools is the main challenge of the whole system and even if the system in Germany exists over decades there is still room for improvement.