ASSESSMENT REPORT II

Of the state of involvement of VET-institutions in bridging education and work in the whole CB area

INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Program

Priority axis: 4; Investment priority: 1

Project code: 16.4.2.104

e-MS code: ROBG-192

Project title: Integrated Culinary Arts and Restaurant Sector Employment Solutions for a Skilled and Inclusive Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Region

Beneficiary: Association “Dobruja Agro and Business School” (DABS) – Lead Beneficiary

1. Introduction. Purpose and Scope of the Assessment report. – 1 page

This section provides a brief content summary of the Assessment report, its focus points and researched areas.

The current Assessment Report is a result from cabinet research on already existing analyses and studies, practical experience through dialogue with the researched parties – VET institutions and business and with the support of statistical data and other reliable resources. The main purpose of the assessment is to define how the VET covers the business needs regarding the professional skills on the students. How the business is included in the process for acquisition on these skills.

The scope is Cross-border region from Bulgarian part with accent Northeast region. Dobrich is the second biggest town in Northeast region and the main center in South Dobrudja. The research gives an information for the all territory of the Cross-Border region in Bulgaria with focus Dobrich County.

The Report gives an information about:

* Objectives and National Priorities of Vocational Education
* Normative Framework in the Vocational Education System for Linking Education - Work. Institutions for Vocational Education and Training - Institutions for Vocational Education, Vocational Training Institutions, Institutions responsible for shaping and implementing VET policy, Stakeholders and expectations for vocational education from the VET system
* Link between VET and the labor market – Employers, Institutions, Job seekers, VET, Labor market - Factors that change the labor market
* Motivational training of trainees in the cross-border region - specific and inherent for the sector only - included in the educational programs, curricula and SER for each occupation; relevant to other sectors - management, marketing, finance, and others that are not specific and unique for tourism sector; of a universal nature and relevant to all sectors - language training, IT skills, interpersonal communication and communication skills
* Recommendations to improve the transition between learning-work
* Conclusion.
1. Objectives and National Priorities of Vocational Education.

Bulgaria

The Vocational Education and Training Act defines the purpose of the VET system, namely: "The VET system prepares citizens for realization in the economy and other spheres of public life, creating the conditions for acquiring professional qualification and for its continuous improvement”. Focused on this goal, vocational education is directly linked to the labor market and its task is to meet the needs of this market, both general and specific. Bulgaria's Priorities for VET are defined in a number of strategic documents, one of which is the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria 2015 - 2020. The priorities outlined in the strategy are in response to the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and in line with priorities:

- smart growth: building an economy based on knowledge and innovation;

- inclusive growth: stimulating an economy with high levels of employment leading to social and territorial cohesion.

In line with European challenges, Bulgaria needs to find, in short term, the possible solutions for achieving balance between demand and supply of a labor force with a certain qualification on the labor market. The VET Strategy sets out the following priority areas at national level that address culinary and restaurant business and lifelong learning:

Priority 1. Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of VET.

* 1. Organization of vocational education and training through work (dual training) as a form of partnership between a Vocational High School and an Employer.

A form of vocational education and training that combines training in a real work environment under the guidance of a mentor by employing an enterprise and training in a vocational school, a vocational high school, a vocational college or a vocational training center at the request of an employer. The form is still not relevant in Bulgaria and can not be said about the concrete results achieved.

* 1. Expanding the application of modular organization of vocational training.

The modular organization of training allows easier access to VET and the opportunity for the training institution to plan and organize the training with the partner enterprises individually, to achieve a better balance between theory and practice in the structure of the modules and the share of the practical training is higher than in the traditional training.

* 1. Improving the quality management system of VET.

Vocational education and training shall ensure high quality results that correspond to the market needs in the short and long term, and also to social and individual needs.

* 1. Creating Prerequisites for Material Assurance of Vocational Training.

Renovation and modernization of the material and technical facilities of the vocational schools, including their ICT infrastructure. Regulatory provision for the establishment of regional high-tech centers to be used by all institutions and organizations involved in the VET system. Application of the principles and technical characteristics of the European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

* 1. Development of a system for updating and supplementing the qualification of teachers and vocational trainers in their specialty in higher education and support for career development.

Improving the capacity of teachers, in line with the dynamically developing labor market, technology in all areas of the economy and learning innovations is essential for improving the quality and effectiveness of VET. The problem of adaptability of teaching staff is very serious on the basis of aging of vocational training teachers and the lack of interest of the younger generations in this profession.

* 1. Training of mentors to conduct practical training in a real work environment.

Mentor training is one of the key elements for the successful implementation of learning through work (dual learning) as a form of partnership between a vocational high school and an employer. It requires a large responsibility and a strong commitment on the part of employers to properly select professionals to be trained for mentors and the possibility of temporarily excluding those workers from the direct manufacturing process.

Priority axis 2. Improving opportunities for access to VET.

2.4. Provide easily accessible and high quality career guidance services for students and adults. Quality career guidance is needed to support the transition from secondary vocational education and vocational training to employment or higher education as well as labor market transitions.

Priority axis 3. Vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning.

3.1. Building a system for validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

Validation is a process of evaluation, recognition and official documentation of the correspondence between knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning and the relevant state educational requirements. According to the strategy, it is expected the opportunities for acquiring professional qualification and increasing the employability and social integration to increase.

3.2. Introducing a credit system in VET

The credit system in VET facilitates the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individual learning outcomes in the field of vocational education and training for persons whose aim is to acquire professional qualifications. The credit system enhances the portability of learning outcomes, which will facilitate the international learning mobility of citizens and increase their employability on the national and European labor markets.

3.3. Enabling adult engagement in training to acquire professional qualification and continuous updating and acquiring key competencies to complement professional knowledge and skills in line with the adopted National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020.

Lifelong learning is of great importance for enhancing the adaptability and competitiveness of the labor force, according to the needs and requirements of the labor market. It is necessary to increase the participation of adults in vocational training and its continuous updating as well as to acquire key competences to supplement the professional knowledge and skills.

Priority Axis 4. Strengthening the participation and responsibilities of all stakeholders to provide staff with the skills required for the economy.

4.1. Activating the involvement of social partners in the VET system.

The VET development strategy recognizes that the VET system in the country can not adequately provide the necessary skills that are sought on the labor market and registers the need to ensure labor market feedback to the provision of vocational education and training.

The dynamics of the labor market, the emergence of new sectors in the economy and the emergence of new professions increase the requirements for vocational education in terms of dynamism, timeliness, flexibility and quality. The registered trend at European level for population aging also requires active implementation of the Lifelong Learning format as a measure to address the demographic challenge in the long run. One of the strategic documents defining the priorities and measures for development in the continuing education is the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020. It defines the strategic framework of the state education and training policy for 2014-2020, aimed at achieving the European objective of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Identifies all participants in the lifelong learning process:

- learners - all persons on the territory of the country engaged in learning in the field of education, formal and informal learning or self-study;

- training providers - institutions conducting training tailored to the needs of society and labor market requirements;

- Employers, branch organizations, trade unions, civil society organizations and other partners;

- districts, municipalities and local communities;

* state bodies - ministries and agencies.

All actors in the process play an important role in achieving the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Strategy. One of the priorities that has a direct link to achieving a qualitative and up-to-date qualification of cadres in the culinary and restaurant business and ensures the link education - work is "Stimulating education and training tailored to the needs of the economy and changes in the labor market".

An important challenge is to promote the acquisition of universal key competences such as learning, initiative and entrepreneurship skills, cultural awareness, and so called "soft skills" such as teamwork, decision-making, conflict resolution, etc. The partnership between business and the different levels and sectors of education, training and research will help to focus more effort on shaping the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences required by the labor market and will stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship in all forms of learning.

Romania

At 60 % in 2014, the participation of upper secondary students in VET in Romania remained above the EU average (48 %). However, the employment rate of recent VET graduates was well below the EU average in 2015 (62.4 % compared to the EU average of 73 %).

VETis making progress in Romania, but remains characterized by insufficient correlation of qualifications and VET curricula with labour market developments, and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms.

The underfinancing of the sector, the quality of teaching staff, drop-outs and graduation rates are additional challenges.

Adult participation in lifelong learning is the lowest in the EU, standing at 1.3 % in 2015. In general, participation in lifelong learning is positively correlated with the education level (3.1 % for tertiary graduates in 2015 vs 0.3 % for those with lower secondary education at most). This situation reinforces existing discrepancies and the low skills trap, particularly for older people with lower levels of education.

Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, graduates from lower secondary education have the option to follow a three-year professional education programme. This includes a significant component of practical training carried out at a school or in a company. Practical training represents about 20 % of the total learning time in the first year, while in the second and third years it increases to about 60 % and 72 % respectively. Companies may also offer scholarships to trainees, conditioned by frequency and high grades. A new set-up for professional training standards in professional education (upper secondary level) was adopted in 2015. On this basis, 200 professional training standards for ISCED levels 3 and 4 were designed and applied starting with the 2016-2017 school year.

Departing form the above status, it is to be mentioned that the objective of VET in Romania is to provide the necessary knowledge to adults in order to assist them in finding a job or developing their own vocational career paths. To this end, national policies are worked out in every country. The Romanian VET system has undergone a major improvement through a reform carried out in the post-Copenhagen and Lisbon period. The reform was primarily aimed at the alignment of the Romanian VET system to the European VET system.

The main vocational education and training (VET) opportunities leading to formally recognised qualifications in Romania are:

* initial VET (IVET), including upper secondary technological programmes,”school- and work-based VET” programmes and post-secondary programmes
* Continuing VET (CVET), as part of adult education.

The National Law of Education is complemented by a set of strategic documents in the context of the National Reform Programme elaborated in line with European recommendations in all sectors.

It is important to mention some of these strategic documents as their effectiveness have relevant impact at VET level in Romania:

* **The VET Strategy for 2016-2020** (adopted by Government decision no. 317/27 April 2016), having as main objectives: increasing VET relevance to labor market needs; increasing participation and facilitating access to VET programmes; improving VET quality; developing innovation and national and international cooperation in VET;
* **The National strategy for Lifelong learning for 2015-2020** (adopted by Government decision no. 418/03 June 2015) being structured on three main pillars:
	+ access and incentives to participation: access and participation to lifelong learning should be increased for all;
	+ quality and relevance: lifelong learning should be relevant to individual and labour market needs;
	+ Partnerships for better information: lifelong learning should be developed in close collaboration with social partners and all relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, in June 2016 Romania adopted a National strategy for lifelong learning. It aims at improving participation and increasing labour market relevance. Planned measures seek to broaden access to lifelong learning opportunities for people who are usually underrepresented (i.e. older workers, low-skilled people, Roma, women, rural residents, young people in transition from school to work, persons with disabilities), but also for other target groups such as teachers and professors, adult learners, training providers, employers, etc.

According to the National education law (no.1/2011) that defines outcomes of primary and secondary education, the entire process of teaching, learning and evaluation should integrate key competences. Challenges are related to initial and continuous training of teachers, so they can help pupils acquire the eight key competences and teach using interactive student-centered methods (role plays, problem-solving, analysis of a situation and informed-decision making, reflexive thinking and finding solutions to self-improving performance).

In the last five years an important progress was made in promoting key competences in VET. The National education law no.1/2011 promotes this. Amendments of the law are envisaged to allow increasing the VET quality and relevance. ESF projects revise the curriculum (based on the training standards revision) and train VET teachers who put in place the new curriculum.

The main developments concerning the integration of key competences in the curriculum for secondary VET refer to:

1. an aggregated approach of key competences with general/ specialized professional competences,
2. a modular approach (for entrepreneurship education, guidance and counselling, etc.), and
3. An integrated approach of the key competences evaluation in professional context.

The main challenges to develop further the key competences in VET are:

* appropriate initial and continuous teacher training for ensuring key competences teaching and learning;
* well-designed learning materials
* development of evaluation tools;
* Ensuring continuous development of key competences in parallel with developing work based learning.

3. Normative Framework in the Vocational Education System for Linking Education - Work. Institutions for Vocational Education and Training.

3.1 Normative Framework in the Vocational Education System for Linking Education - Work.

Bulgaria

The legal framework that defines vocational education and training in Bulgaria includes the following acts:

*Law on National Education and Rules for its Implementation - Define the terms "vocational education" and "vocational training";*

*Vocational Education and Training Act - Ensure the right of vocational education and training of citizens;* meets the needs of a skilled labor force that is competitive on the labor market; provides conditions for the functioning and development of the vocational education and training system; regulates the organization, institutions, management and financing of the vocational education and training system.

*Law on the level of education, the general educational minimum and the curriculum -* defines the conditions and the order for completion of the level of education and for passing to the next degree as well as the characteristics of the general educational minimum and the curriculum.

*Labor Code -* regulates social partnership and collective bargaining as well as individual employment contracts through which VET activities can receive wide public support and optimal realization in enterprises*.*

*Employment Promotion Act* - defines the national policy in the field of employment and vocational training for adults.

*Law on the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications -* regulates the relations for the recognition of professional qualifications of citizens of EU Member States and third-country nationals.

*Law on community centers -* determine opportunities for informal education of children and adults.

Romania

The restructuring the IVET (initial vocational education and training) system in Romania, as a result of the low enrollment rates and precarious infrastructure, lead to the progressive dismantling of the arts and crafts schools as of 2009, especially of the agricultural high schools whose number decreased with more than 80% in the past 15 years. The remaining ones are generally considered as non-attractive due to the quality of buildings, endowments and personnel. This leads to a constant reduction of the enrollment rates.

During the analyzed period, 2007-2012, the gross enrollment rates of vocational education have decreased in total value, as well as in regard to gender and regions. Also, it was acknowledged that the male population has a higher enrollment rate. From extreme values (in total) of 16%, respectively 19% in 2007-2008 the level reached in the last year that was analyzed is of 0.8%, respectively 1.8%.

 The decline starts at the same time with the 2009-2010 academic year, when the measure on dismantling arts and crafts schools was implemented. In what concerns vocational education, the school dropout situation is accentuated by the measure on dismantling vocational schools, which encouraged school dropouts to leave the system in 2010, thus the values doubled during the last year as compared to the average value of the 2007-2010 period (19.8% as compared to 8.5% in 2007). The situation highlighted by the evolution of the 2007-2010 period should be a concern.

Besides the accentuated reduction of the number of pupils, following the dismantling of Arts and Crafts Schools (ACS), the dropout rates are also increasing, reaching a fifth of the number of persons enrolled at the beginning of the 2010/2011 academic year .

In accordance with the same Study of the Ministry of National Education, the graduation rate of vocational education registers low levels in the 2007-2011 period, fluctuating between 44% in 2008 and 14% in 2011. The decrease in mainly a result of the negative perception regarding social prestige ensured by this level of education, which determines most of the pupils to choose theoretical education completed with a baccalaureate diploma. At the same time, the reorganization of a relatively high number of school units with vocational track in high school type of units contributed to the decrease of possibilities to access this level of education. It should be noted that, as compared to the other levels of education, in what concerns vocational training, boys have a better situation that girls, registering a higher graduation rate (19.3% boys as compared to 10.2% girls).

An important modernization process is currently being carried for the IVET system in order to promote acquiring skills closely correlated with the requirements of the labor market and the needs of the private sector; developing and supporting the upper secondary and post upper secondary education; expanding the utilization of a credit transfer system (namely, between the vocational education system and the post upper secondary education); providing the possibility to attend at least one vocational training program to the graduates of secondary education that have obtained low results, below the age of 18 and who dropped out of school; acquiring skills in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (which shall be ensured free of charge by vocational and technical state owned schools).

Government Emergency Ordinance no 117/2013 established the legal framework for a new component of vocational education and training (VET) within the educational system. The new VET courses shall start in the 2014-2015 academic year, with programs that cover learning objectives and which entail teaching classes corresponding to the 9th and 10th high school grade. These were necessary in order to take into consideration the VET component within the mandatory educational system and in order to allow the graduates of vocational schools to continue their education in the 11th and 12th high school grade. Unfortunately the curriculum is overloaded, with a high percentage of activities based on theoretical learning, and no specific regulations were introduced in relation to on-the-job learning.

The on-the-job vocational training system launched in 2012 did not attract a lot of pupils. At the same time, the availability depends on the companies’ level of interest, which is rather low, especially due to the economic and financial crisis.

The public expenditures allocated to education have in Romania one of the lowest levels as compared to the EU27. In accordance with the data of the Ministry of National Education (MNE), during the 2006-2008 period, the education budget exceed 5% of the GDP, and in 2010 and 2011 the education budget was decreased, having a value of approximately 4% of the GDP. Nevertheless, the official EUROSTAT data indicate that the information available for this indicator is valid only for 2005 and 2009.

The total education expenditures (in million PPS) had in 2009 the value of 10,078.2 million PPS, in accordance with EUROSTAT. Even if this value is two times higher than the one registered in 2005, these expenditures are very similar to the ones reported by the Member States with a smaller school population (e.g., Finland, Czech Republic or Ireland).

The low allocations for education and research display the economic difficulties faced by Romania, as well as the low level of awareness of decision makers in relation to the added value of these areas in increasing competitiveness and creating high quality jobs (See the Working Document of the Commission Services regarding the evaluation of the 2012 National Reform Program and Convergence Program, p. 11).

Therefore, following the dismantling of vocational schools, in the past few years a significant decrease was acknowledged in what concerns the share of active population that graduated vocational education, from 26.4% in 2007 to 21.7% in 2011 (Analysis regarding the needs of education and vocational training in Romania, Ministry of National Education). Schools can have a double role: providing the possibility to follow the vocational education route, at the same time with the reestablishment of the vocational schools, and providing theoretical education by means of an apprenticeship program (regulated in accordance with Law 279/2005), as authorized training provider.

**The main vocational education and training (VET) opportunities** leading to formally recognised qualifications in Romania are:

* initial VET (IVET), including upper secondary technological programmes,”school- and work-based VET” programmes and post-secondary programmes
* continuing VET (CVET), as part of adult education.

The National Law of Education is complemented by a set of strategic documents in the context of the National Reform Programme elaborated in line with European recommendations in all sectors.

The main forms of adult vocational training are: initial, qualification, further education, specialization and re-qualification, where:

1. Initial training (basic training) is aimed at the attainment of a minimum amount of knowledge necessary for the completion of a low-level vocational activity. This form of training leads into a certified qualification;
2. qualification training modules offer a limited range of vocational competences which enable an individual to undertake and carry out certain activities;
3. further training/education contributes to the development and consolidation of vocational competences related to the same qualification;
4. specialization courses seek to develop vocational competences in a restricted field of activity;
5. Re-qualification modules are second chance training opportunities oriented towards the acquisition of job-specific competences.



***Figure 1: Chart of the Romanian education and training system***

* 1. Institutions for Vocational Education and Training.

Bulgaria

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, the main VET institutions are vocational schools, vocational high schools, art schools, sports schools, vocational colleges, vocational training centers, information and vocational guidance centers, etc. The Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training makes the following distribution:

Institutions for Vocational Education:

Provide training in professions from the list of professions for vocational education and training.

*Vocational high schools*

*Sports schools*

*Private schools*

*Arts Schools*

Vocational Training Institutions:

*Vocational colleges -* Vocational training of persons with completed secondary education in professions with IV degree of professional qualification from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training.

*Vocational training centers -* Vocational training for persons over 16 years of age. Acquisition, updating and improvement of professional qualification or re-qualification by profession or part of profession with I, II and III degree of professional qualification.

Institutions responsible for shaping and implementing VET policy:

* *The Council of Ministers -* defines the policy in the field of education, incl. vocational education and training, and employment;
* *Ministry of Education and Science -* conducts the state policy in the field of vocational education and training, the state educational requirements for acquiring qualification in professions, approves the List of professions for Vocational Education and Training;
* *Ministry of Labor and Social Policy -* participates in the implementation of the state policy in the field of vocational education and training by studying the needs of the labor market;
* *The Ministry of Health -* participates in the coordination of the List of professions for Vocational Education and Training; defines chronic diseases and physical disabilities that are contraindicated in vocational education and vocational training in professions from the List of professions for Vocational Education and Training;
* *Branch Ministries -* involved in the process of organizing and conducting vocational education and training;
* *National Agency for Vocational Education and Training -* licensing activities in the vocational education and training system, as well as coordinating the institutions involved in vocational guidance, education and training;
* *Employment Agency -* implements the state policy in the field of training for acquiring and building the professional qualification of adults - unemployed and employed;
* *Employer organizations -* participate in the preparation and updating of the state educational requirements for acquiring qualification in professions in the List of professions for vocational education and training, conducting the exams for acquiring professional qualification and offering representatives for participation in the examination commissions;
* *Workers' and employees' organizations at national level* - participate in updating the state educational requirements for acquiring professional qualifications, the List of professions for Vocational Education and Training;
* *Branch trade unions -* protect the interests of trainees to employers on labor and social security issues in conducting practical training in enterprises, participate in the organization and conducting of the exams for acquiring professional qualification and offer representatives for participation in the examination commissions.

Romania

In Romania the **organizations which are responsible for VET** are:

* The Ministry of Labour whose responsibilities are to elaborate policies and programs in the field of vocational training and control the way in which these programs are implemented;
* The Ministries of various economic and social sectors which seek to ensure the continuous vocational training of the employees who operate in these sectors;
* The National Council for Vocational Adult Training, a council which works under the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education, determines the medium and long term needs of vocational adult training and collaborates horizontally with others organizations involved in vocational adult training;
* The National Agency for Occupational and Vocational Training is a national public institution whose role is to organize and finance employment-related services. In addition, it also acts as a mediator between employers and the people who need a job and administrates the budget for the payment of unemployment benefits;
* The National Agency for Qualifications is a national organ which elaborates and approves new occupational standards or modifies and cancels the existing ones. Its role is to represent and support Romania's interest regarding the certification of vocational competences at an international level;
* The Commissions for Authorization of Training Providers is in charge with the authorization of the training providers whom they provide with counselling and all the in-training they need and also monitors the latter’s activity.

In Romania, VET qualifications (technological programmes, ‘school- and workbased VET’ programmes and post-secondary VET) are delivered based on the training standards, which are developed in close cooperation with the social partners and are validated by the Sectoral Committees. All IVET qualifications and their duration are registered in the National Qualification Register and are approved by law. A training standard is a document which describes the learning outcomes that participants in a technological programme or in a ‘school- and work-based VET’ programme should acquire and be able to demonstrate. The training standard is based on the relevant occupational standards in force and is the regulating document with the most important role in designing VET curricula. It also stands as general basis for the assessment of learning outcomes and the award of a qualification certificate.

3.3 Stakeholders and expectations for vocational education from the VET system.

Bulgaria

All of the aforementioned institutions belong to the stakeholders involved in and having a role in vocational education. They are part of the VET process and their role and commitment are crucial. According to a MES study, one of the stakeholders who is responsible for the low assessment of the effectiveness of the vocational education is the employers. The explanation is that they use professional school cadres but do not make any contribution to this training. Business, for its part, has a great need for well-trained professionals with current knowledge and skills but highlights the key role of the state in the VET process. According to employers, strict regulation is needed to prevent the escape of trained staff abroad. Emigration is one of the factors for the inefficiency of vocational education. On the other hand there is a leak of labor force from one employer to another, once the employer has invested in human resources. Employers are not guaranteed that after they have invested in training their workers, they will remain working in the organization and will contribute with work and skills for its development. Another reason for employers not to engage actively in the learning process is that they need much more time to show and teach the learner the skills needed than to do the job themselves. There is no motivation for business to invest time and material resources in training. Students are also an interested party, but they are dependent on the interest of the state and the business. According to the same study by the Ministry of Education and Science, vocational education is aimed at preserving the workplaces of teachers and has a strong social element. The market orientation of the training is minimized or not present at all. In most cases, vocational high schools provide a wide range of specialties, whether or not there is a need for such specialists in the region. On the other hand, for some of the newly emerging occupations on the labor market training is not provided. The analysis of the situation training - labor market - work oriented towards the culinary and restaurant business in the Dobrich region gives the following data:

There is one vocational high school in the Dobrich district that offers training in the specialties: hotelier - 26 students; restaurant catering - 52 students; chef - 26 students; baker-confectioner - 26 students; chef - dual learning - 26 students. A total of 156 professionally trained professionals in the hotel and restaurant business graduate each year the only professional high school in the region. The economic profile of the area shows a highly developed services sector, with a large share of tourism. In the Dobrich region are some of the most attractive tourist sites on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast - Albena, Balchik, Kranevo, Kaliakra, Yailata, Dalboka, Shabla, Kavarna, Durankulak. The need for trained staff, especially in the culinary and restaurant sector, is enormous. For example, in the year 2017 in Albena resort 30% of the hired personnel were from Ukraine. This means that there are not enough trained and qualified tourism professionals in the region who can meet the needs of the business. However, not always the proximity of an enterprise from a given sphere to a vocational school in the same field is not essential in the choice of an educational establishment or in the realization of the labor market. Personnel mobility is a strong phenomenon in the labor market and can be found in different regions of the country and abroad. This is also one of the factors that affect cross-border mobility. Constanta region also offers jobs in the field of tourism and in particular sea tourism. The similarity of the two regions determines identical problems and needs. This also implies an opportunity for staff exchanges, teacher exchanges and joint training programs in the field of tourism.

At the same time, it is crucial for businesses, the workers to have additional skills beyond the professional ones that support and improve the service. These are the so-called "soft" skills - handling a foreign language, intelligence, communication, time management, teamwork, conflict resolution skills, working with tricky clients, skills for tasks leveling, creativity, understanding the others, etc. Employers' expectations are focused on the formation and development of these skills, along with the professional ones, because they increase the quality of work of employees and workers. On the part of jobseekers, these skills help for finding a good job and dealing with work commitments in a quality way.



Romania

Statistics provided by the National Authority for Qualifications, the agency responsible for authorizing the vocational training providers, indicate that in the 2004-2011 period approximately 4,600 providers of vocational training were authorized, for approximately 21,600 training programs, at national level.

Recent changes in the vocational education system are also relevant to the future demand and supply of apprentices. In order to tighten the link between the economy and the training process, the Romanian Government made changes in structure and approach of vocational education at second level. These were outlined in the Order of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports no 3168/2012 on the organization and operation of the 2-years-period vocational education and the Order of the Minister of National Education no 3136/2014 on the organization, operation, admission and enrolment in a 3-years-period public vocational education. The situation of the vocational education system is presented in Annex no 4.

The new 2 year and 3 year vocational education programs are guided by the German dual vocational education system and represent an appropriate mix of theory and practice. The framework plans for vocational education were also approved through a ministerial order and describe the curriculum, the practical training and internship, as well as the allocation of the training hours. Graduates of the 2-years vocational education program, who completed practical training are entitled to enroll in the certification exam for level 2 professional qualification corresponding to reference level 3 of the European Qualifications Framework. Graduates of the 3-years vocational education program can obtain level 3 professional qualification within the National Qualification Framework corresponding to the reference level 3 of the European Qualifications Framework.

The ratio between the theoretical and practical training (i.e. for 3-years-period vocational education: 1st year of vocational education - 80% theoretical and 20% practical training; 2nd year of vocational education - 40% theoretical and 60% practical training; 3rd year of vocational education - 28% theoretical and 72% practical training) places Romania closer to the apprenticeship based training system than the one based on school training .

The 3-year vocational education program provides a double recognition, academic and professional.

It allows both for progression to further education (as the vocational education graduates who pass the exam for certifying the qualification can continue their studies in the 11th grade of the secondary education, and later they can pass the baccalaureate exam), as well as the qualification necessary to obtain a job. The significant share of practical training can increase the skills levels of pupils, if obtained through practical training sessions held at the location of the economic operator / public partner institution.

There is also a possibility to attend a practical training internship to acquire a Level 2 professional qualification. This form of internship is available to young people in of lower secondary schools who do not continue their studies in upper secondary education immediately after graduation. It is also available to young people from schools of lower secondary TVET who interrupted their high school upper cycle studies. The practical training internships include technological laboratory classes taught by specialized teachers, and practical training classes taught by masters - specialized instructors, which account for a total of 720 hours of training.

The objective of this form of training is to develop the work skills of pupils transitioning from school to work, and improving their insertion on the labour market. Practical training can be organized, both in specialized laboratories and workshops of the authorized or accredited educational establishment, as well as at the location of partner businesses involved in the vocational training of pupils. The practical training performed at the location of businesses is organized only based on cooperation agreements concluded to this regard, embodied in conventions for performing the practical training. Practical training performed at the location of the businesses has multiple benefits: pupils transition from school to active working life; it provides the employers opportunities for rigorous employment selection of future school leavers; and it reinforces the partnership between school and labour market directing the adaptation of the training programs to its requirement.

Special issues are related to the phenomenon of “qualifications not adequate to the labour market” (skill gaps), with particular regard to vocational and tertiary education. During the period 2007-2011 the vocational education recorded a downward trend in both urban and rural areas. Following the abolition of schools of arts and crafts (SAC), the vocational school population reached a minimum of 12,382 pupils enrolled in the reference period. While a new VET strand has been introduced in the compulsory second level school system the curriculum remains overloaded with a high proportion of theory-based learning and no specific regulations on work-based learning have been introduced.

Complex changes in the Romanian economy means that a different mix of skills will be required in the future for the labour force . This is evidence of the emergence of skills gaps at the start of the economic recovery process, with a shortage of skilled workers, especially in the manufacturing and agri-food sectors, which have growth potential. Recent research of the National Centre for the Development of Technical and Vocational Training (CNIDPT) in partnership with the national Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection (INCSMPS) (see: CEDEFOP, 2011 ) indicates significant labour force shortages in occupations, which require professional and technical qualifications. Such qualifications are required for most of the job vacancies existing at the time of the study, with a significant demand in the textile and leather industry, mechanical engineering and constructions.

Adequate investments in services for developing the labour force are needed in order to increase the adaptability of enterprises to change, notably at a time of significant changes in the nature and type of most professional occupations.

Review of vacancies notified to the County employment agencies for employment has shown that some vacancies remain unfilled for long periods of time. Although the agencies distribute the said jobs to the suitably qualified people looking for a job registered in their database, such persons are often not employed because they do not meet the specific requirements of the businesses. In such situations, apprenticeship at the workplace is potentially a real alternative to the advantage of businesses who can train the staff they want and have a person employed in the job declared vacant, for which they also receive a subsidy.

10,968 vacant positions were notified to the National Employment Agency (NEA) out of which almost two-thirds (6.700 or 61%) did not require a person to have previous employment experience. Most vacant positions were in Major group 8 – Installations and machinery operators; machinery and equipment assemblers and Major group 9 – Unskilled workers. This suggests that employers prefer to hire unskilled workers, either because they do not find skilled labour force or they prefer to train their employees at the workplace; or that they hire unskilled workers in order to provide lower salaries. It can also be an indication that apprenticeship would be an option in order to fill these vacant positions.

In the period 2012-2013, according to data of NEA, the positions that remained vacant for the longest periods of time were in the clothing and commerce sectors (see Annex 5). In 2012 most of the positions which remained vacant for long periods of time were registered in Major group 9 (Unskilled workers) and Major group 8 (Installations and machinery operators; machinery and equipment assemblers). In 2013 most of the positions, which remained vacant for longer periods of time, were registered in Major group 3 (Technicians and other specialists in the technical field). The same sectors remain weak in 2014, according to information provided by NEA (see Annex 5).

In addition, the number of NEETs increases every year in Romania as in other European countries, and apprenticeship is a viable alternative for these young people. Many school leavers complete their education without acquiring a qualification, which recommends them for an apprenticeship program, especially in the case of young people who do not want to attend further education. Apprenticeship enables such young people to obtain quality vocational training and nationally recognized skills, providing the opportunity to obtain a job and continue learning.

***Up-skilling and retraining of redundant workers***

Many persons were laid-off following the closing down of factories in certain sectors (mining, steel etc.) and whose qualifications are no longer required in the labour market. In addition many of those made redundant are aged over 45 years, which hinders their access to employment. Although employment agencies have included them in training programs for requalification, these persons do not have experience in the new qualification acquired, which is also a barrier to finding a job. Apprenticeship at the workplace has a double advantage for these persons - it offers a job and provides the opportunity to practice new skills and to obtain a qualification.

After completing the apprenticeship period, people often remain employed, which implies stability of jobs created for apprentices.

Having a nationally recognized qualification certificate, the former apprentices can also find a job with another employer or even find a job in the European area, or they can set up their own business.

1. Link between VET and the labor market

Bulgaria

The topic of the link between vocational education and training and the labor market has so far covered mainly the following areas:

- Proposed majors and the needs of the labor market;

- Actuality of programs and specialties and expectations of the business;

- Quality of training and requirements of employers;

- Acquired practical skills and internships;

- Training of pedagogical staff and up-to-date education;

- Legal basis and market requirements;

- Government policy and business interests;

- Stakeholders and active participants.

The role of professional organizations in creating and strengthening the link between learners and the labor market becomes more and more important. The labor market contains several important components and the knowledge related to them is extremely important for a good professional realization.

Employers

The labor market is a very dynamic environment that depends heavily on the processes that happen to the **business**. It is the representatives of the business that are one of the components of the labor market. They are the main employer and determine the qualifications and skills that jobseekers must possess. Factors that influence these requirements can be different - technology, politics, economic, social, demographic, etc.

 Another employer is the **representatives of the state and local authorities** - the institutions. The requirements for persons working in institutions are less determined of economic factors than political, social and technology.

**Self-employment** is also a form of employment that is strongly influenced by economic factors but personal skills are driving.

Institutions

Another component of the labor market are the institutions that implement the employment policy at national and regional level.

**The Employment Agency** is the national body that sets the framework for the implementation of the employment policy in Bulgaria**.** It has its own regional and local authorities **- the Regional Employment Services and the Labor Office Directorates**. All national and European employment programs and measures reach the unemployed and employers through these subdivisions. The country and the European Union devote a certain resource to providing subsidized employment in order to achieve certain indicators and benefits. The difference between subsidized employment and the free labor market is the strictly defined requirements for the selection and inclusion of the unemployed in employment and respectively the eligible employers who will use this subsidy to secure employment. Relationships between employees and employers are partly regulated by the requirements of the programs and are not subject to the mechanisms that move the free labor market.

The Employment Promotion Act, its Implementing Rules and the National Employment Action Plan are the normative framework that defines the activities of employment institutions. It is very important for stakeholders to be well informed about the role they play in the labor market and what opportunities it offers.

Labor Office Directorate implement state policy for employment at local level. In order a person to benefit from their services, he/she need to be registered as unemployed or working looking for a job. Labor offices also offer services to non-registered persons - inclusion in vocational training for employed persons, provision of work programs for persons belonging to a particular social category, etc. The services provided by the Labor Offices Directorates at local levels are - job vacancy on the free market - non-subsidized employment; inclusion in employment programs and measures under certain conditions - subsidized employment; Inclusion in courses leading to qualifications; inclusion in motivation training; Job search workshop with self-assessment of skills and opportunities for realization, motivation for finding a job, entrepreneurship, psychological profile, preparation of documents for work, job interview, etc.

Job seekers

The main components are job seekers whose skills largely determine the quality of employment. The persons on the labor market are different categories - unemployed; employee looking for a new job; students and just completed training; mothers with children up to 3 years old; released from prison; disabled; persons who care for people with disabilities; persons over 55; youngsters up to 29 years of age. Each of these distinct groups brings the peculiarities of the social segment to which it belongs besides the professional and soft skills that are personal. It is these specifics which are decisive for the choice of the employer or for inclusion in the relevant employment program.

VET

Professional training organizations are an essential element of the labor market because they build the link between the people who have gone through their education and the employers. The legally binding VET-employer relationship is defined but in practice there is a very large scope for work. The participation of employers in the formation of vocational training curricula, participation in the exams, providing a base and mentor in the conduct of production practices, etc., is regulated but there is still an insufficient commitment of the business to the training process. Dual learning is also not enhanced as well as mentoring. For now, professional organizations are conducting training, liaising with employers, but engagements stop here. It would be valuable for both learners and businesses to be created a platform for closer cooperation between educational establishments and businesses as well as learners to be introduced into the specifics of working on concrete real projects even at training and practical training stage with actual know-how from business representatives. Organizing job fairs and exhibitions presenting the business opportunities and skills of job seekers are useful initiatives that can go beyond the local and regional level. Particularly useful would be on a cross-border territory with similar features and characteristics.

An important point is the interaction between branch organizations, government institutions and educational institutions to grow at an increasingly rapid pace. This interaction may have different expressions:

- Active involvement in the formation of specialties;

- Active inclusion in the curriculum design;

- Active inclusion in examination committees;

- Providing a basis for conducting learning practices;

- Providing trained mentors to conduct practical training in a real work environment;

- Providing internship in a real working environment;

- Commitments to recruit recent graduates for the first 6 months of the internship;

- Implementation of internal career development programs.

Labor market

The labor market as a dynamic and changing system is influenced by the following trends:

* Emerging economies acquire a broad representation in global production relations;
* Demographic changes and migration change the nature of the workforce;
* The development of technologies diminishes the boundaries between economic sectors and changes traditional ways of working;
* Organizational structures in business are evolving and becoming more flexible and more networked.

(source "Possible work - how to look for it and where to find it?" Pavel Pavlov Avangard staff consulting)

Factors that change the labor market:

* Demographic changes, especially aging populations;
* The increasing diversity of the workforce (gender, ethnicity);
* Increased insecurity of household incomes and increased regional inequalities;
* The growing desire for a better balance between work and privacy;
* Change in the working environment imposed by information and communication technologies (ICT), outsourcing, internationalization and the need for greater flexibility;
* Convergent technologies and interdisciplinary skills, in particular the combination of biotechnology, information and communication technologies, nanotechnology and cognitive science;
* Digitization of production: automated and manufacturing processes (eg involving 3D printing).
* Development of ICT and storage and transfer capabilities of large data sets;
* Changing the economic outlook due to globalization and technological change, economic and financial crises;
* The growing economic power of Asia and the influence of the countries of the East;
* New business ecosystems - Leading companies are increasingly referred to as "networking organizations";
* Lack of natural resources and degradation of ecosystems: Exhaustible natural resources that lead to higher costs of extraction and decline of the environment;
* Reducing the possibility of political action due to limited public finances as well as higher levels of social transfers to the aging population, education limits and skills development initiatives.

As a result of the factors that form the labor market, the following changes occur:

* Migration
* Changing the values of employees - choosing employers based on their own values
* Flexible negotiation
* Virtual opportunities for remote employment
* Artificial Intelligence and Automation of Highly Qualified Occupations
* Globalization
* Geographic Alternative Centers of Excellence
* Trends from cybercrime
* Shortage of resources or climate disasters
* Partial fragmentation of the EU

(source "Possible work - how to look for it and where to find it?" Pavel Pavlov Avangard staff consulting).

A key point in the relationship between the unemployed and the employer is the job seeker's skills. Vocational training and practical experience are the first thing the employer demands as a requirement. These are the so-called "Hard skills" that are fundamental when applying for a job. The most important competencies for employers in hiring new employees are:

* Professional skills and knowledge - specific skills and knowledge of the professional field, adequate work experience;
* Readiness and willingness to learn - receptivity, curiosity, desire for self-improvement, search and acceptance of feedback;
* Adaptability - ability to adapt to corporate culture, flexibility, fast approach to the changing environment, including stress and short-term skills;
* Interpersonal skills - Teamwork skills, Collaboration, Conflict resolution, Teamwork, Creating contacts;
* Efficiency - Ability to handle work tasks with good results
* Self-management skills - responsibility, independence, organization of time and work tasks;
* Motivation - enthusiasm, positive attitude towards work;
* Communication in native language - clear, convincing and literate expression in oral and written form;
* Foreign language competences - use (written and spoken) of a foreign language, intercultural experience and knowledge;
* Self-presentation - Skills for successful presentation (including when applying for a job and during an interview), self-assurance, positivity, persuasiveness, knowledge of business communication and label;
* Computer skills - use of word processing programs, tables, Internet applications;
* Office skills - finding and organizing information, documents, data; working habits; use of office equipment;
* Customer Care Skills - responsiveness, empathy, positive attitude, tact, tolerance, patience, courtesy;
* Ethics - loyalty, honesty, integrity;
* Critical thinking - analytics, logic, impartiality, precision, depth;
* Creative skills - creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, ingenuity, non-standard thinking;
* Entrepreneurial skills - initiative, entrepreneurship, proactivity, business knowledge and flair, determination, decision-making and risk-taking skills;
* Leadership Skills - Skills for Planning, Managing and Motivating People, Making Decisions, Negotiating, etc.;
* Technical skills - specific skills for using software, programs and equipment;
* Mathematical skills - work with numbers, accuracy, method, precision.

(source "Possible work - how to look for it and where to find it?" Pavel Pavlov Avangard staff consulting).



"In business circles, there is an understanding that thanks to" hard skills "one will get an invitation for an interview, but" soft skills "are those that can guarantee the position.“ The ideal candidate has a combination of hard and soft skills. Soft skills are qualities, personality traits and social skills that everyone owns in varying degrees. Many employment experts strongly recommend job seekers to improve their soft skills along with their hard ones, such as continuing their education or starting specialized training. Many employers are reluctant to recruit technically qualified candidates who, however, show little emotional investment in their careers or the ability to work well in team or under stressful conditions. (Labor Market Trends in Bulgaria in 2016 - 1stonlinesolutions.bg).

The professional organizations in Bulgaria are still focusing on the acquisition of hard skills by the trainees and very few hours are set in the curricula for soft skills development. The quality and relevance of vocational education and training (VET) in the labor market continues to be challenging. As a result of a study by the General Directorate “Education, Youth, Sport and Culture”, which provides an overview of education and training for 2017, the following conclusions are drawn for vocational education in Bulgaria compared to trends in Europe and the link with the labor market:

„The proportion of students in VET of all students in secondary education (ISCED 3) is above the EU average (52.6% compared to 47.3% in 2015), but the employment rate of recent VET graduates is lower (64.2% vs. 75%). Although some VET schools provide high-quality training, a significant part of them is mainly an opportunity for students with poor performance. Only two-thirds of VET students complete their educational-qualification degree (National Audit Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2016). Insufficient information on the labor market prevents adaptation of the curricula to the needs of employers. The amended Vocational Education and Training Act of August 2016 recognizes training through work as a form of practical training for the acquisition of professional qualifications and it is organized on the basis of partnerships with enterprises. As a result of the introduction of the dual vocational training system and the synchronization with the VET Act (which came into force in August 2017), as well as the amendment of the Labor Code, VET students aged 16+ may enter into contracts with employers. Since September 2017, all VET schools will conduct the training in accordance with the new school documentation. Instructor / mentor training is included as part of the scheme launched in 2016 as part of the VET development strategy. "

"The participation of adults in the learning process is slightly increasing in 2016 (2.2%), but remains significantly below the EU average of 10.8%. Achieving the national target of 5% is difficult and the European target of 15% remains too distant. There is insufficient coordination between the different participants and programs in the field of adult learning and the supply does not meet the needs of specific groups of students or the immediate needs of the economic sectors. The legal framework for non-formal and informal learning supports the transition to the labor market and the advancement of education and training. Since March 2015, 35 standards for acquiring professional qualifications (out of a total of 250 planned) have been developed. Several ESF funded projects are being implemented to improve adult learning, including literacy courses for adults. "

By comparison, according to the same survey for Romania, it is found that the participation of adults in the learning process is still very low despite the need for increased qualification. At present, efforts are being made to introduce dual vocational education and training, as well in Bulgaria, but it has not become a system. According to a survey by the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce for the vocational training of the employed in tourism, the majority of the employees assigned to work are under-educated, because many of the jobs in tourism do not require a high qualification. In terms of management positions, the situation is the opposite. These jobs require a wide range of in-depth knowledge and specific managerial skills, which are obtained in the Bachelor's and Master's degrees. According to CITUB19, 81% of employers in the Tourism sector are ready to hire young people, provided they have the necessary professional and foreign language qualification. The main requirements of the business are mainly related to professional and foreign language training. In order to respond to the dynamically changing requirements for those working in the field of tourism, it is necessary to work actively to maintain a sustainable relationship between the tourism industry, educational institutions and branch organizations.

Romania

The recent modest evolution of the Romanian economy, as well as of the economy of other states located in the European region, is reflected in a low number of jobs available on the market. Many sectors are in regression, leaving very few sectors registering growth. The 2014 – 2020 National Competitiveness Strategy identifies within the industrial and services sectors the competitive fields that have recently registered an increase in the added value: automotive, food and beverages, green agriculture, textiles and leather, IT&C, financial services. However, full employment in these sectors represents approximately 700 000 persons, respectively less than 10% of the labour force. Although it is forecasted that an increase will be registered in these sectors, their influence on the economy is limited.

Romania faces a number of problems related to the labour market. Among them, the main problem is the major lack of demand for labour force, which is reflected in the low rate of domestic employment and the massive migration of the labour force willing to benefit from opportunities abroad. This situation creates an extremely unfavorable platform for a progressive policy of the labour market.

The reduction of the employment rate during the recession manifested particularly in rural areas, while employment in urban areas continued to grow.

An analysis of the employment trends in the period 2005-2012 shows a reduction (of 1.2% reaching 65.7% in 2012) of employment among the population between 20 and 64 years in rural areas and, in particular, in primary and secondary sectors (2.6% in agriculture and 4.4% in industry and constructions) and a 14.5% increase in employment in the tertiary sector (services). Therefore, the gap between Romania and the EU27 average is still too large, in the proportion of the Romanian population requiring employment in sectors of the economy other than agriculture. In 2012 almost one-third (30.5%) of the population in Romania worked in agriculture, compared to the EU27 average of 5.2% in the same year.

Such poor economic performance jeopardizes the country’s competitiveness. The World Economic Forum includes labour force with insufficient education among the most problematic factors that hinder doing business in Romania.

With regard to the transition of young people from education to the labour market, the NIS Survey “Access of young people on the labour market”, a module complementary to the Survey of the labour force in households (AMIGO) of 2009, 2nd trimester, illustrated that the high school and vocational education graduates reach insertion rates somewhat lower, only 34.3% and respectively 33.3%, obtain a job one year after graduation. The lowest insertion rates are found among the lower secondary, primary education graduates or among those that did not graduate any form of education. In such cases, the chances of being integrated on the labour market are very low, only 14.6% of them obtain a significant job, one year after they left the educational system.

Young people are facing difficulties in finding stable employment for several reasons:

* Competition in a labour market where there is a general shortage of employment opportunities; also, workers with tenure do not give up their jobs;
* The relative lack of professional experience puts young people at a disadvantage in the competition with other workers. According to recruiters, 59% of the employers cannot afford to hire young inexperienced people;
* The level of education attained. Even those with good results face lower employment rates than their counterparts in other European countries;
* Lack of skills required by employers (both technical skills and professional qualifications and secondary skills, e.g. the ability to organize their own activity and learning process, cognitive, communication and organizational skills);
* The labour market aspect for young people deteriorated during the economic crisis, the unemployment rate growing from 18.6% in 2008 to 22.7% in 2012;
* Significant discrepancies are recorded between Romania and the EU27 in terms of youth employment rate (age group 15-24 years). In 2012, the average employment rate in Romania was 9% lower than the EU average (23.9% in Romania, compared to 32.9% in the EU27); for young women, the difference was of 10.7%;
* By analyzing the youth employment rates (age group 15-25 years) depending on the level of education, in the 2004-2011 period, as compared to the EU28, the highest discrepancies can be observed in the field of higher secondary education and non-tertiary post-secondary education, EQF levels 0-2, reaching a level of up to 14.6% in 2011. As for the other levels of education, primary, lower secondary and tertiary, the discrepancies are low, of up to 5%.
1. Motivational training of trainees in the cross-border region.

Bulgaria

The key knowledge, skills and competences of the employees in tourism are considered at several levels:

* specific and inherent for the sector only - included in the educational programs, curricula and SER for each occupation;
* relevant to other sectors - management, marketing, finance, and others that are not specific and unique for tourism sector;
* of a universal nature and relevant to all sectors - language training, IT skills, interpersonal communication and communication skills.

According to the CIPD survey, the most common competencies in tourism are: communication skills, people management, teamwork skills, customer service skills, result orientation, problem solving skills. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the most important requirements for the employees in the field of tourism are multifunctionality, skills for direct and constant contact with clients and commercial abilities. Emerging competences are global language skills combined with intercultural competence and specific knowledge and skills among staff regarding disabled clients. Increasing the innovation potential of enterprises from the restaurants and hotels through investments in techniques and technologies, culinary processing of new products and realization, requires new jobs with new knowledge of the staff. The continuous increase of the requirements for the persons working in the field of tourism and in particular in the restaurant and culinary sector requires both good professional training and the continuous development of soft skills as well as a high level of motivation.

Maintaining a high level of employee motivation and provoking it for job seekers in the culinary and restaurant sector is a continuous process that is managed by two parties. On one side are employers who motivate their employees with tangible and intangible incentives. Tangibles are expressed in obtaining higher wages, bonuses, discounts when using services in the company, etc. Intangibles are related to personal development and skills upgrading - company training, exchange practices, introduction of new technologies and preparation for work with them, etc.

The other side is the Labor Office Directorates, which implement the national employment policy at local level. In 2013 the Employment Agency was expanded with the component "Psychological support, motivational training and counseling for unemployed persons" the National Program "Activation of inactive persons". Within this component, psychologists were trained and recruited by the Labor Offices Directorate to offer a new service “Job seekers atelier”. In the cross-border region on the Bulgarian side such ateliers exist in the cities - Veliko Tarnovo, Vratsa, Dobrich, Pleven and Rousse. The aim is to be provided psychological assistance services and motivation for unemployed people to actively conduct themselves on the labor market by providing professional support to the unemployed from vulnerable groups on the labor market when seeking and starting work, as well as stimulating the active behavior of the unemployed by organizing and conducting motivational trainings. Depending on individual needs and identified problems, psychologists provide the unemployed with one or more psychological services:

- Individual psychological counseling, which involves the use of specific psychological techniques to reduce tension and overcome the initial difficulties of consulting with unemployed people, hearing people, identifying problems, working on personal barriers to overcome them, help in decision making, helping unemployed people to make evaluation of the results of the actions identified during previous consultations, adoption of decisions on new actions leading to the achievement of concrete results and resolving existing problems, etc.

- Psychological study for diagnosing the individual psychological characteristics of the unemployed person, specialized selection at employer's request for announced vacancies, selection for inclusion in programs and measures for employment and training. Depending on the goals of the psychological survey, complex methods are used - interview, colloquy, observation, test methods, etc.

- Group psychological counseling to build social skills in job search, tackle stress and increase self-esteem for the unemployed, building basic communication skills and presentation in front of employers, preparing job application documents, support in job realization and adaptation to the labor market, etc.

- Conducting joint consultations with experts from consultancy team/teams (labor mediators and/or case managers) of unemployed persons from the groups at risk in the labor market, etc.

Some of the themes in the atelier are:

* "How to look for a job? Building a Behavioral Plan "
* "Building a Personal Professional Project"
* "Documents to apply for a job - motivation letter"
* "Documents to apply for a job - curriculum vitae"
* "Sources of job vacancy information"
* "Job interview".

(Source MLSP - Employment Agency)

Motivational training for trainees is an important element of the overall process of vocational education because it makes the direct link to the labor market and builds the bridge between education and work. Regardless of the acquired professional qualification, if the trainee can not get to the right employer and present himself/herself successfully, he/she will very hardly enter the labor market.

Romania

Following data provided by EU Commission within the Education and Training Monitor 2016 for Romania, the participation of upper secondary students in VET remained above the EU average (48 %), being at 60 % in 2014. However, the employment rate of recent VET graduates was well below the EU average in 2015 (62.4 % compared to the EU average of 73 %). Adult participation in lifelong learning is the lowest in the EU, standing at 1.3 % in 2015. In general, participation in lifelong learning is positively correlated with the education level (3.1 % for tertiary graduates in 2015 vs 0.3 % for those with lower secondary education at most). This situation reinforces existing discrepancies and the low skills trap, particularly for older people with lower levels of education.

The most recent survey of Romanian National institute for Statistics published in 2017, on Adult Education, shows that at national level a total of 7.235.000 people, representing 65.4% of the total adult population, participated in one or more learning activities in formal, non-formal or informal education, during the period September 2015 to September 2016. Of these, 8.8% participated in two forms of education or even all three.

By regions of development, the highest rates of participation in formal education were registered in the 2.5% in the South-West Oltenia region (2.5%) and in the West Region (2.2%). In the South East Region, the rate of participation was 1.7%.

The rate of participation in non-formal education has reached the maximum value in Northwest region (7.4%). High values were also recorded in Bucharest-Ilfov Region (6.7%), Central Region and South Muntenia Region (both 6.4%). The lowest rate was observed in the South-West Oltenia region (3.0%). In the South East Region, the rate of participation was 4.5%.

The participation rate in informal education had the highest value in the North-East region (71.1%) and the lowest in the South-East region (53.8%). In four other regions (Bucharest-Ilfov, South-West Oltenia, North-West and Center) the participation rate in informal education was over 65%.The informal education considered in the survey consisted in assessing population learning on their own in the family, at work or at other events in everyday life.

As an overall perception, the survey shows that of the 769 thousand people who participated in a formalized or non-formal education between September 2015 and September 2016, 316 thousand (41.1%) would have liked to participate in more such educational activities, and another 98,000 (12.7%) although they would not have liked to participate more, still recognized that they would have needed for more VET activities. The most frequently cited reason for non-participation in both formal and non-formal education was the cost of participation, indicated by 36.3% of respondents. The higher frequency of this response was recorded in the case of persons residing in the rural area (41.5%) and the unemployed (53.8%). Another barrier blocking the participation in education, indicated by 34.8% of people, is responsibilities related to familial situation, being more frequent for female respondents. Not just external factors can prevent people from attending education; sometimes the reasons for non-participation are more of personal context. Thus, age was considered a barrier to participation in education by 21.7% of respondents. For people aged 55-64, this response was provided by 61.3% of people. A percentage of 12.3% of people mentioned the lack of support by the employer, and another 17.5% did not (more intensely) participate in education, for personal reasons.

Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, graduates from lower secondary education have the option to follow a three-year professional education programme. This includes a significant component of practical training carried out at a school or in a company. Practical training represents about 20 % of the total learning time in the first year, while in the second and third years it increases to about 60 % and 72 % respectively. Companies may also offer scholarships to trainees, conditioned by frequency and high grades. A new set-up for professional training standards in professional education (upper secondary level) was adopted in 2015. On this basis, 200 professional training standards for ISCED levels 3 and 4 were designed and applied starting with the 2016-2017 school year.

In April 2016 Romania adopted a national VET strategy structured around four key objectives:

• improving labour market relevance;

• increasing participation;

• improving quality;

• developing innovation and national/international cooperation in VET.

VET is making progress, but remains characterized by insufficient correlation of qualifications and VET curricula with labor market developments, and inadequate quality assurance mechanisms. The underfinancing of the sector, the quality of teaching staff, drop-outs and graduation rates are additional challenges.

1. Recommendations for Improving the Transition Training-Work.

To improve the overall process learning - work, a comprehensive approach needs to be applied in shaping the new responsibilities and commitments of all stakeholders. The recommendations in the report are based on studies by the Ministry of Education and Science and related to the subject of Vocational Education and Training and Employment organizations.

* Incentives for employers to take part in vocational education - business relief, credits for innovation and small business development, open days to promote occupations, providing mentors from businesses.
* Updating curricula and learning content - changing the ratio of theory and practice in favour to the practice, curricula should be tailored to the labor market demand for the particular region and correspond to the current development of the specific profession, current content, textbooks and prepared lecturers, enhancing teachers' capacity, attracting young teachers, introducing paid practice - learning by paid work with an employer, introducing protected professions - privileged professions and professions that the market needs, but there is no interest for them in the learners, the SERs will be refined for each industry, and the exams themselves will be attended by representatives of the branches.
* State to pursue a policy to promote GHG business entry - modernizing professional technologies and providing mentors, motivating employers to accept students to outsourced jobs through preference, project participation, tax and relief benefits or subsidies.
* Social policy of the state - training of students from economically and territorially more underdeveloped areas, retraining of adults whose professional qualifications no longer meet the requirements of the labor market.
* Introducing a credit system in vocational schools.

The main factors are determined and they are key to achieving effective link - vocational education and training - work - teacher training, modern facilities, a clear and active link between business and vocational education and government policy aimed at stimulating business to look for staff and to participate actively and responsibly in the development of the labor market.

1. Conclusion.

Romania has progressed a lot in the direction of the Copenhagen strategies and the Lisbon guidelines. Although the system was in line with other European systems since the 1990s, the government has reformed the entire system along with its components: institutions, the Law of Education, providers and the relationships between them. It has encouraged the development of a rigorous VET system by supporting the providers and their accreditation. It has steered education in the direction of observing the National Qualifications Framework or standards and developing such forms of education as: adult education, continuing education, second chance education, etc.

In spite of these efforts, the Romanian VET still has to continue and accelerate the pace of its reform, involve more actors, stakeholders and institutions and make all policies, tools and paths more visible to the users.

The dynamically changing labor market, not only at national but also at cross-border and European level, requires new approaches in the field of vocational education and training. Over the last decades, the vocational education and training is one of the main factors for sustainable socio-economic development in Europe. European initiatives responding to the rapid changes in the economy and society require periodic updating of vocational education and training and the modernization of the learning base so that it can contribute to increasing employment and social inclusion. The potential of everyone for lifelong learning and facilitated access to higher education, in line with the needs of society and the labor market, are top priority. The vocational education and training system in Bulgaria is developing in the direction of supporting the green and circular economy, creating lasting qualified employment and mobility of personnel for the exchange of knowledge, skills and know-how. The initial vocational and continuing vocational education and training needs to be an attractive learning opportunity, to provide flexible access to training and to acquire qualifications - exported practices, lifelong learning, exchange of specialists, active involvement of employers and branch organizations. An important point is coordinated implementation and management of national and European instruments in the area of recognition of competences acquired, quality assurance, mobility and transparency of VET mechanisms and processes. Higher effectiveness of vocational training can be achieved by creating an opportunity to acquire professional qualification in a profession or part of a profession by validating professional competences acquired through non-formal training and non-formal learning. In the overall process of training-employment, the role of each of the stakeholders is important - the state and legislation define the framework, and it must respond to the dynamics of the labor market and reflect the specificities of each segment of it; the vocational education and training system establishes curricula, provides the learning materials and implements the responsible relationship between learners and businesses; lecturers who prepare the staff and are responsible for up-to-date knowledge and skills, good training and competences; employers are the last and at the same time the first link in the chain as they determine the need for staff and their role is extremely important. Each segment of this process plays an important role and the process of change must be complex in order to achieve efficiency and quality improvement.

The content of this material does not necessarily represents the official position of the European Union.