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Erasmus+ Key Action 3

GET INVOLVED IN EP4A: EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Needs Analysis Report – Slovakia

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Introduction – Aim of this document

This document is part of the WP1 Preparation. Aim of this document is to report on the process of the needs analysis supporting the Country Report. It is based on the Methodology Guidelines prepared for the purposes of WP1.

This is an internal document supporting the national country report of Slovakia about the state-of-the-art. On the basis of Country reports, a Synthesis report will be drafted and circulated.

Methods used in Needs Analysis Process

Survey for SMEs

- ▶ Standard questionnaire (Google Forms) shared online and email to target SMEs (email contact lists, website post, Social Media post)
- ▶ Designed to collect insights on the costs and benefits of offering and/or expanding apprenticeship placements, incl. of possible solutions for increasing the attractiveness of apprenticeships among SMEs in Slovakia

Interview with SME

- ▶ semi-structured interview with Slovak SME to complement the desk research

Focus group in Slovakia

- ▶ to deepen learning of the costs and benefits of apprenticeship provision on the level of SMEs
- ▶ questions asked in an interactive group setting where participants were free to talk with other group members

Survey for SMEs Report

To collect the opinions of the Slovak SMEs, an online survey in Google Forms was created according to the common EP4A framework Methodology Guidelines. The survey had 3 general questions about the respondent and then 10 questions regarding the topic of apprenticeships. The invitation to participate to survey with link to the Google Form was sent to SMEs through email lists and was also published on the website and Facebook profile of RDA. There was 2 emails with invitation and link sent to stakeholder groups – one by RDA and one by the Slovak Chamber of Crafts – altogether more 350 email accounts. The survey period was 2 weeks – between 1.3.2017 and 14.3.2017. 23 geographically spread responses were collected.

Location	Number of responses
Bratislava	5
Košice	3
Kysucké Nové Mesto	1
Liptovský Mikuláš	1
Martin	1
Piešťany	1
Poprad	1
Skalica	1
Sučany	1
Trnava	1
Uhorská Ves	1
Vráble	2
Ždiar	1
Not specified - whole Slovakia	3

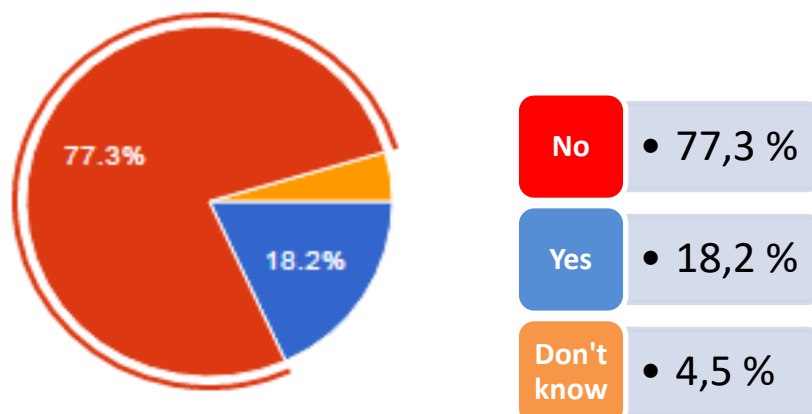
It should be noted, that currently runs a large national project (with allocation 33 mil. €) dedicated to the topic of dual education in Slovakia, and similar surveys have already taken place within other projects dedicated to this topic (e.g. through Swiss funds, EEA grants).

28% of the respondents were representing companies with more than 250 employees, the rest 72%, were representing SMEs with up to 250 employees.

Among the respondents was 63,6% who already had some experience with apprenticeship and 36,4 % who without any experience with apprenticeship.

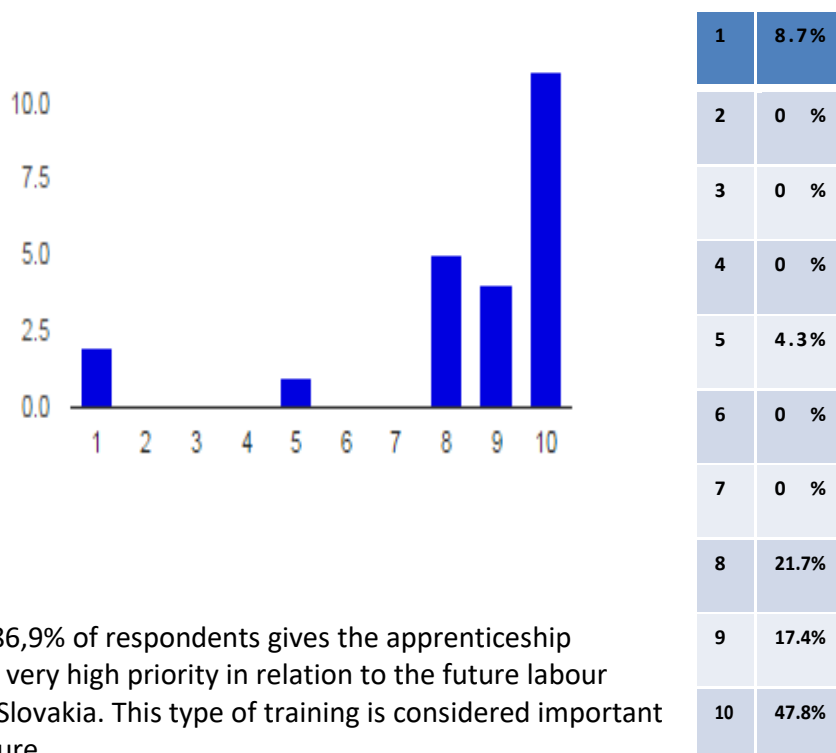
The questions in Slovak were slightly amended to fit the national context, and were not pure translation from the Methodology Guidelines. Below is a summary of the collected responses.

Question 1: According to your opinion, is there enough information available about apprenticeship/dual education in Slovakia?



The answers indicate that there is still room for improvement in the information provision services and awareness raising, as large majority indicated that there is currently not enough information provided in Slovakia.

Question 2: On scale from 1 (the least) to 10 (the most), what is the importance of the apprenticeship schemes/dual education for the future labour market in Slovakia?



Together 86,9% of respondents gives the apprenticeship schemes a very high priority in relation to the future labour market in Slovakia. This type of training is considered important for the future.

Question 3: According to your opinion, what discourages the SMEs most to participate in the apprenticeship scheme/dual education system?

Most frequent answers were related to:

- administrative and financial complexity
- no guarantee that the apprentice will stay with the company
- training future competition to ones business
- not filling the minimum quota for opening a class with requested specialization
- lack of will to cooperate on the side of the secondary vocational schools

Question 4: According to your opinion, what motivates the SMEs most to participate in the apprenticeship scheme/dual education system?

Most frequent answers were related to:

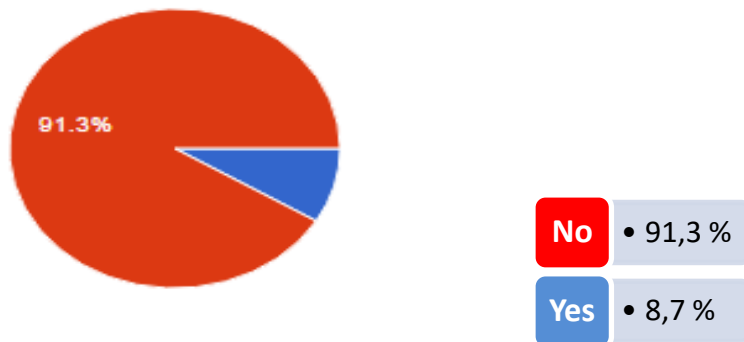
- lack of qualified labour force
- opportunity to train new employee
- good intention

Question 5: How would you estimate the minimum cost associated is engaging in apprenticeship (per year)?

Most frequent answers were related to:

- it is very diverse, depends on the type of sector
- 250 EUR/month/apprentice

Question 6: Do you have knowledge about any form of financial assistance for SMEs, which would like to participate in apprenticeship scheme/ dual education (grants, subsidies from chambers and associations, bank loans, etc.).



Question 7: If your answer to Question 6 was “Yes”, could you please specify?

Most frequent answers were related to:

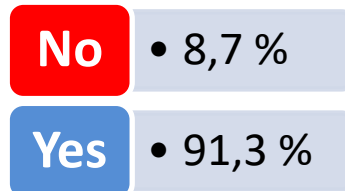
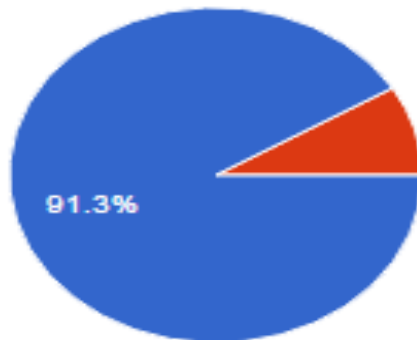
- tax deduction from the tax basis according to number of hours of training per learner

Question 8: What type of non-financial support would be the most useful? E.g. consulting, information materials, information campaigns, etc.

Most frequent answers were related to:

- legal consulting, counselling
- information campaign, media campaign
- information campaign for parents
- possibility to create information materials and use them in recruiting learners
- creation of centers, where parents and learners would could get information about dual education
- support of dual education among career counsellors

Question 9: Would you take an apprentice to your company?



Question 10: What were the reasons leading you to your answer to Question 9? Could you please specify?

Most frequent answers were related to:

- training own employee
- transfer of skills and experience
- positive previous experience
- we want to participate in developing the young people and enable them to get a professional experience in real context
- we do it for years already and we help the students to learn something practical, and when we find someone appropriate, we help also ourselves
- despite the fact that we have obtained the certification for dual education system, we do not have students enrolled in it, but we have apprentices on an ad hoc basis – we collaborate with schools and we want to teach the students something, but we do not want to replace the school
- we were interested in the dual education system, we are certified, but the financial burden (no support from the state e.g. in terms of lowering the social contribution, income tax) of the dual education in terms of time (at least 4 years waiting for return of the invested financial costs) is disproportionate. We do not know how the costs of „dual“ for one learner will increase for example in 3 years since he/she started and so on.

Interview Report

The interview was conducted by Mrs Daniela Jaslovska, President of the Slovak Chamber of Crafts. Only one interview was recorded, since the input from this interview and also from in-formal discussions with SMEs confirmed the output of the desk research.

Data about the interviewee

Name of the interviewee: Milka Harmathova

Brief bio: Designer and owner of a Slovak clothing brand Donna Rosi (www.donnarosi.sk). She started the family company in 1989 and is a stable part of the Slovak clothing industry. Currently has 15 employees, including her 2 daughters. She supports charitable activities, and in her company she tries to provide opportunities to disadvantaged young people (from re-educational centers, visually impaired).

How was the interviewee chosen and approached: Previous contacts and experience based on membership in the Slovak Chamber of Crafts, the interview took place over the phone.

Would this person agree to provide their contact data (email, phone number) to you?: Yes

Input from the interviewee

General awareness about apprenticeship

Mrs Harmathova follows the development of the dual education system in Slovakia, since this is a topic also within the chamber, but also it is currently also presented in the Slovak media. She has considered that her company would participate in the scheme, so she is aware about the system and its processes. She finds apprenticeship a useful practice, but not in the current context in Slovakia and in her particular sector.

Main bottlenecks to participation

For Mrs Harmathova, the apprenticeship (dual) system presents too much of a burden and long term commitment that is not compensated adequately. In her sector, fashion industry, she also finds the system pushing her to create competitors, which is also one of the main obstacles to participation. She prefers working with young people according to her own system that enables her to create opportunities for the motivated ones.

Motivation to participate and how it could be enhanced

On the other hand, Mrs Harmathova sees the benefits of the system, she is aware that young people lack practical skills to function in the labour market. According to her, more support and more motivation for SMEs in terms of releasing the burden they are expected to carry in the dual system would enhance the participation of SMEs.

Focus Group Record

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS				
No.	Name	Organisation	Position	Contact (email; phone)
1	Marian Hanusek	SZK	member	0904/236645
2	Jana Hodurova	Guild of roofers	Responsible for education	0911/538610
3	Terezia Fegyveresova	SZK	member	0905/492653
4	Magdalena Decova	SZK	member	0902/709182
5	Daniela Jaslovska	SZK	president	0903/735324
6	Emanuel Noga	SZK	member	0907/987296
7	Viktor Kubal	SZK	PR	0903/252577
8	Roman Lakostik	Council of Employers for the System of Dual Education	Expert	
9	Milan Kuzma	Council of Employers for the System of Dual Education	Expert	
10	Vladimir Micka	SZK	Bratislava regional president	
11	Luba Pavlova	RDA	director	
12	Eva Balazovicova	RDA	Project manager	
13	Eva Lovasikova	RDA	Financial manager	
14	Boris Bilek	RDA	Project manager	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS OF SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS				
<p>Members of the SZK, members of the Council of Employers for the System of Dual Education, respondents to the online research questionnaire.</p> <p>At the beginning of the Focus Group, the participants introduced themselves, the project EP4A was introduced and also the results of the survey were presented. Then the discussion took place.</p>				

LOCATION/VENUE:	Račianska 71, Bratislava
DATE:	14.3.2017
TIME:	14:00 – 16:00
MODERATOR:	Eva Balazovicova

Statement 1: How to increased supply of apprenticeships

The supply is much higher than demand. This question was closed fast.

Statement 2: How to increased social responsibility of SMEs

SMEs, especially crafts, have a tough position in the Slovak business environment. There is no interest from the young people to become craftsmen, since it is considered to be a difficult and struggling job. Even the current craftsmen do not want their children to take over their job one day, they prefer they go to university and work in an office. SMEs do not believe that society is responsible towards them, so it is difficult to persuade them to feel more social responsibility. They do not feel any support and struggle with their daily survival, so they are not willing to take any more tasks.

Statement 3: How to strengthening of the WBL and apprenticeships systems in your country

SMEs say they would take the young people, but the young people are not interested and many of them lack any discipline. They say the system encourages the young people not to participate in the WBL – the schools are not interested, because they loose money, the parents are not interested because they get subsidies for children in education (any education, even though the children are not disciplined and don't fulfil their obligations), and the SMEs have to invest their own resources to uninterested youth.

The current system of dual education is seen as too burdensome for SMEs. They do not have capacity to prepare the workplace according to the legal requirements, and train and allocate their scarce staff as intructors.

The solution could be “transcompany sectorial learning centers” that would pool the resources and help the SMEs to provide the practical education, and also to help them ensure more benefits for them, e.g. use the productive work of the apprentices when they have high demand for their products. These centers are currently being discussed with the policy makers and could be part of the novelisation of the current Act on VET 61/2015. This idea was welcomed by the participating SMEs. Their motto is: „No more burdens to SMEs“, since they are already struggling.

Statement 4: Increased competitiveness of SMEs at national and European level

SMEs position in the national economy is not encouraging. They see a lot of bureaucracy, lot of compulsory payments to the social and healthcare systems regardless of their profits, low profits, and bad experience with invoice payments, judicial system and state control bodies.

The image of crafts is not good among the children and their parents. In the current demographic situation in Slovakia, there is a tough competition for pupils from the general education schools,

which SMEs believe are too many and take all the kids that could be in VET. VET is experiencing lack of pupils. There is a so called race to the bottom in the quality of provided education.

SMEs believe that the government has to change the legal framework, otherwise the profile of SMEs and crafts will not be raised.

Statement 5: Enhanced standing and recognition of SMEs as a good employer, and more broadly among their clients, suppliers and other key stakeholders

Same as above.

Conclusions and final recommendations of the focus group

The problem is in the image of entrepreneurship and crafts in Slovakia. Youth is not interested in this pathway and apprenticeship offer is not met by supply of apprentices. Only 32.6% of offered apprenticeship positions are filled.

More work with parents is recommended.