Work-based learning in a European and national context

Gabriela Liliana PETRE
Director of NCTVETD
What is work-based learning?

1. Acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks/activities in a vocational context, either at the workplace or in a vocational education and training institution. (CEDEFOP)

2. Programs for both secondary and post-secondary students which provide opportunities to achieve employment-related competencies in the workplace. Work-based learning is often undertaken in conjunction with classroom or related learning and may take the form of work placements, work experience, workplace mentoring, instruction in general workplace competencies and broad instruction in all aspects of industry. (Naidu, R. VET Glossary, NCVER, 2008 (Rev 2011))
Which are the stakeholders involved?

- authorities (policy makers, decision makers)
- social partners
- VET schools/universities/VET providers
- companies
- teachers/trainers
- company tutors
- pupils/students/trainees
Which is the potential of work-based learning?

- It lowers unemployment risks among the young people
- It provides a better transition from the educational environment to a professional life
- It answers to the immediate needs of employers in terms of skills and qualifications
- It may contribute to a decrease in the school drop out rate
Work-based learning - the second option

- work-based learning and technical vocational education and training are less attractive in general
- negative perception - "for those who are less equipped from the intellectual point of view"
- insufficient placement position within companies
- reduced opportunities for career and access to higher qualifications/education
Vocational training - the current options in Romania

- **Initial training (technical and vocational education)**
  - starting with the age of 14
  - EQF levels 3 to 5

- **Continuing Vocational Training**
  - initiation, qualification, upgrading
  - EQF levels 2 to 4
  - authorized training providers/employers

- **Work-based apprenticeship**
  - starting with the age of 16, minimal period spanning from 1 to 3 years, EQF level 2 to 4

- **Internships - higher education**
Initial training - options

- highschool-based education - technological route
  - access at the age of 14, 4-years long, EQF level 4
- vocational education
  - access at the age of 14, minimum 3 years long, EQF level 3 (started from the 2014-2015 school year)
  - access at the age of 15, 2 years long, EQF level 3 (started in the 2014-2015 school year; it will end in 2016)
- company-based internships
  - access at the age of 16, following the graduation from mandatory education, duration of 720 hours, EQF level 3 (this route is mostly used for "second chance" type of programmes)
- post-highschool-based education
  - access at the age of 18, with or without a maturity exam, 1.5-3 years long, EQF level 5
Initial training expressed in numbers 2014/2015 school year

- Technological high school - daytime courses – 274,906 students, evening classes – 53,984 students

- Internships - total of 1,236 students

- 2-year vocational education – 22,650 students and over 2,500 companies involved in the practical training of students

- 3-year vocational education – 24,952 students (first year only) and 3,200 companies involved in the practical training of students

- Post-high-school education – 56,781 students
Vocation training in the dual system - new route -

Vocational training in the dual system - newly introduced route in December 2014 (GEO 94)
- access at the age of 16, following the graduation from mandatory education
- the school and the company are sharing costs and responsibilities
- 1/3 training in school, 2/3 training in the company
- the student also works as a company employee
Vocational education and training
Strategic objectives for 2015-2020

- Improvement of labour market relevance for the TVET systems

- Increasing participation and facilitating access to vocational training programmes

- Improvement of vocational training quality

- Development of national and international innovation and cooperation in the field of vocational training
Work-based learning
European context

2010
- Bruges Communiqué (the European agenda for VET cooperation) - objective: including work-based learning in all IVET courses
- Agenda for new skills and jobs

2012
- Rethinking education: investments in skills for better economic and social results - Work-based vocational training, such as alternance training, is a central pillar of VET systems in Europe, with the purpose of lowering unemployment rates among young people, of facilitating the transition from learning to work-based experience and of answering the labour market needs for skills
Work-based learning
European context

2013
- European Alliance for Apprenticeship - promoting measures for improvement of employment among young people (introducing apprenticeship schemes/strengthening the existing ones)

2015
- Riga Conclusions (a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for 2015-2020) - promoting work-based leaning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships, by involving social partners, companies, chambers and VET providers, as well as by stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship.
Work-based learning
- Challenges -

- **Involvement:** companies, training providers and trainees represent the key stakeholders (contractual ones) in work-based learning (accreditation, costs, responsibilities, resources, available places)

- **Quality:** coherence of training and learning outcomes, quality of training according to standards (education and qualification related standards). Bruges Communiqué (2010) - Member States agreed that the quality assurance system applicable to training providers should be extended to companies that provide work-based learning by the end of 2015.
Work-based learning
- Challenges -

- **Cooperation between the learning environments:** monitoring progress of trainees, exchange of information between the training provider and the company, available human resources, mutual trust.

- **Support for trainees:** customized support required, limited capacity for quick adaptation to environments with different rules and procedures, low level of motivation/interest for learning during the work-related activities