

Thematic working group on professional development of VET trainers

Effective approaches to trainers' continuing professional development, career opportunities and recognition

Outcomes of peer learning activities

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Introduction

The paper aims to serve developing guiding principles on the changing roles, competences and professional development of trainers in VET, as indicated in the [Bruges Communiqué](#) (Council of the European Union; European Commission, 2010), which the [Thematic working group](#) (TWG) on professional development of VET trainers is working towards. It presents the findings from research and from the peer learning activities of the TWG as regards opportunities for:

- (a) professional development of in-company trainers provided by the state, sectors, professional associations and companies;
- (b) validation of trainers' prior learning (for example, competences acquired on the job).

Peer learning is one of the methods of learning and exchange of experience among the participating countries on issues of common interest. Two peer learning activities took place:

- [In-company trainers: competence requirements, certification and validation](#), Alkmaar, Netherlands, 19-20 September 2012;
- [Effective approaches and support to continuing professional development of in-company trainers](#), Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-30 May 2013

1. The European context

Improving continuing professional development (CPD) of in-company trainers has been on the EU policy agenda for some years but it will become even more important in the context of the increased policy attention to:

- (a) the need to equip people with job-specific and transversal skills that contribute to increased productivity and innovation of European enterprises and address skill mismatches (European Commission, 2010);
- (b) the efforts to revitalise, establish or strengthen apprenticeship (-type) programmes as one of the means to help improve the employability of young people, especially, within the European [Youth Employment Package](#) and the [European Alliance for Apprenticeship](#);
- (c) the need to improve training opportunities for working adults, including incentives to training by companies (European Commission, 2012b), and make lifelong learning a reality for all.

The increased focus on work-based learning (one of efficient ways to address the issues above), its quality and outcomes leads to the awareness of the key role of those who provide formal and non-formal training in companies. This calls for opportunities for trainers to acquire the right set of competences and be prepared for more complex and challenging tasks. Trainers nowadays often need to go beyond conveying vocational knowledge and skills and supporting workers in learning within work practice to coaching and mentoring, providing guidance and stimulating learning culture in enterprises (Cedefop, 2011). They have to become lifelong learners themselves and support lifelong learning in their companies.

The [Bruges Communiqué](#) (Council of the EU; European Commission, 2010) invited the participating countries to improve initial and continuing training for teachers, trainers, mentors, counsellors by flexible training provision and investment. It also called for national,

regional and local authorities to create opportunities for better cooperation between schools and enterprises to improve teachers' knowledge of the current work practices on the one hand and to improve trainers' general pedagogical skills and competences on the other hand. Although there is only one short-term EU deliverable set for teachers and trainers, some others would also require support to trainers' continuing professional development, for example: maximising work-based learning, including apprenticeships; creating traineeships for teachers in companies; increasing participation of adults in lifelong learning, especially, the low-skilled and groups at risk.

In its Communication '[Rethinking education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes](#)' (European Commission, 2012b), the European Commission stressed the importance of the quality of teaching and training for learners' performance and invited the Member States to:

- (a) strengthen the professional profile of teaching professions;
- (b) establish competence frameworks for trainers in initial and continuing vocational education and training (VET);
- (c) promote excellence in VET through ensuring that teachers and trainers have high professional and pedagogical skills and competences, are aware of markets/work processes, are able to participate in professional networks and that companies support continuing professional development of teachers and trainers.

The challenges of improving the skills of the workforce, increasing the levels of skills of the low-skilled and older workers, of modernising VET systems and of increasing the links between education and training outcomes and the needs of the labour market are also addressed in the [country-specific recommendations](#) adopted by the Council of the European Union. Although these recommendations have not explicitly addressed any issues related to supporting professional development of in-company trainers so far, to address the multi-faceted challenges countries will need to reflect on and develop opportunities for CPD for those who train diverse groups of learners in the workplace environments.

2. Key issues: findings from research and peer learning at EU level

(a) Defining qualification and competence requirements and standards

Existing research and findings from the [first peer learning activity](#) of the TWG show that there is no unified approach to requirements, certification and validation of competences of VET trainers in companies ⁽¹⁾ across countries and sectors, neither in initial (IVET) nor in continuing (CVET) vocational training.

In countries where workplace learning is part of IVET programmes (for example, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands), qualification requirements are more likely to be explicitly stipulated. Trainers usually have to be qualified practitioners or skilled workers and have a certain period of work experience in the field as well as a proof of pedagogical training (Cedefop, 2010a and c). It is up to companies to ensure the availability of competent staff and the requirements to the level of qualification and competence differ from country to country (see [PLA 1 report](#) for more information).

⁽¹⁾ The TWG focuses on in-company trainers, operating in both initial and continuing training in the following situations: skilled workers who conduct continuing training of co-workers in addition to their regular tasks (as part of their job tasks) and workplace tutors and mentors in apprenticeship schemes.

In countries with more school-based systems (for example, Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Poland, Portugal), trainers are more likely to have to comply with the requirements for teachers.

The situation in CVET is even more complex, as there are either no requirements (for example, Austria, Estonia, Czech Republic, France, Poland) or the requirements are set at the institutional level, for training providers (for example, France, Poland, Romania). However, over the last decade, some countries defined the competences and developed non-mandatory qualifications of trainers in CVET (for example, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Romania), including validation and recognition of prior learning, some of which were reviewed in recent Cedefop's publication, '[Trainers in continuing VET: emerging competence profile](#)' (Cedefop, 2013b).

(b) Types of competences needed

The analysis of the **competence requirements** available across countries reveals that in spite of national differences, some common areas of competence can be established. At least **four groups of competences** are considered important for trainers in VET, including those who train in companies (Cedefop, 2013b):

- (a) competences related to their specific technical domain, sector;
- (b) competences related to serving the company's strategy and enhancing its competitiveness through training;
- (c) pedagogical/didactical competence, training-related competences;
- (d) transversal competences that help trainers support the learning process.

Each group of competences could be of higher priority to trainers in specific settings (for example, an apprentice master or a trainer of employees) or of greater concern to various stakeholders (for example, technical competence can be of higher importance for an employer while multicultural awareness or pedagogical skills can be considered more important by the state).

(c) Three pillars of competence development of trainers

Defining competence standards or profiles is important but only the first step to effective support to CPD of trainers in companies. Continuing professional development is based on **three pillars**: training programmes, assessment and validation of prior learning and certification as a training professional.



Certification is one of effective solutions to stimulate CPD of trainers in VET. Getting a recognised certificate can also increase their professional recognition and higher esteem and demonstrate their competences to the employers. Certification can be based either on a training programme or on a validation procedure or on both.

Most certification procedures (Cedefop, 2013b) are accompanied by **training programmes** where competence standards serve as a basis for curricula (for example, Austria, France, Greece, Ireland, Romania, UK). Such programmes provide that trainers acquire the missing competences or/and update the existing ones to the required level.

Validation of the competences acquired on the job, in external institutions and through professional practices is a cornerstone of CPD of in-company trainers. More and more countries establish validation systems (Cedefop, 2012); some have already a long experience (for example, France, Netherlands). Validation processes are based on competence standards/profiles too.

In **France**, validation of learning from experience (*validation des acquis de l'expérience, VAE*) is legally defined and regulated. It may lead to the award of a full certificate and is applied for all diplomas, titles and certificates included in the national register of vocational qualifications (*certifications*). Certificates are awarded on competence-based standards that include the analysis of the occupation, main activities and relevant competences as well as the level of qualification.

In **Malta**, following legislation, the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), within the Ministry of Education and Employment is developing a system of assessment, recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning.

3. Systematic approaches (models) to supporting professional development of in-company trainers at national, sectoral and company levels

Although research and peer learning findings point to a large diversity of situations in IVET and CVET in the countries and various approaches to developing competences of in-company trainers, CPD for trainers in companies can be developed, provided and supported as part of:

- (1) national VET reforms and lifelong learning strategies;
- (2) sectoral initiatives;
- (3) pilot projects in programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Lifelong learning programme (LLP);
- (4) learning and skill development strategy of individual companies.

3.1. Trainers' CPD as part of the national VET reform and lifelong learning

One of the main areas where national authorities play an active role is publicly-funded training.

(a) in initial vocational training for the young people

Countries' experience shows that support at national level to training of trainers in VET, including those in enterprises, is mostly linked to national reforms in VET (for example, Finland, Estonia, Malta), more specifically to the increased effort to (re)introduce (expand) **apprenticeship-type training** and **work-based learning** for young people (for example, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Romania, Spain, Sweden) or improve its quality (for example, Austria, Germany, Switzerland).

National approaches to training in-company trainers to work with apprentices and students in work placements are characterised by the following:

- they are initiated and led by the education and training authorities;
- there are usually competence standards and/or nationally-recognised qualification developed;

- they can ensure a wide coverage and access to training for in-company trainers;
- the quality and comparability of training can be ensured through accredited and recognised providers;
- the involvement of stakeholders, especially, the social partners increases the potential for better cooperation of schools and companies.

In **Finland**, the National Board of Education supports the training programme for workplace instructors as part of the Government strategy to promote work-based learning and skill demonstrations. Training of trainers has been an important element of all projects. Training of trainers is the responsibility of VET providers. The new guidelines (2012) recommend that as many people involved in workplace instruction as possible should participate in training (to date, approximately 50% of trainers have been trained). The content of training is developed at the national level. Providers receive guides and guidelines. They are not mandatory but all providers use them to ensure quality and coherence of training.

- All qualifications acquired in initial VET include an optional module 'Workplace instructor training'. Similar modules are included in some further and specialist vocational qualifications: the content of qualifications is defined by the relevant branches; some branches will include a trainer module when the qualifications (designed before 2010) are revised and updated.

In **Malta**, the College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) in collaboration with the Employment and training centre (ETC) is in the development of a new approach to apprenticeship as part of VET programmes delivered by the college. The MCAST is responsible for quality assurance and will accredit trainers/supervisors based on their qualifications, competences and professional experience. The MCAST offers a full-time teacher training course to its lecturing and training staff, delivers a Graduate teaching certificate in VET and, on demand, a 4-credit train the trainer course (the introductory teacher training certificate in VET).

In **Spain**, as part of new orientation to more work-based learning, a trainer certificate linked to Level 5 of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) is envisaged.

In **Sweden**, support for work-based learning and for in-company trainers has been high on the agenda since 2009 as part of national efforts to strengthen apprenticeship. Public funding is increasingly channelled to support school-company partnerships and to train trainers by the business sectors, by the schools responsible for vocational education and training programs and by other educational bodies. However, the providers faced challenges to get the in-company trainers to participate and to get teachers allocate enough time for planning and carrying out the training. The quality of training was also an issue. To address the challenges, national initiatives are put in place to strengthen the local providers by e-learning training for in-company trainers, to reach trainers and to promote cooperation between companies and VET providers. This is done by introducing VET-developers who will support schools/teachers in their interaction with companies/trainers at local and regional levels, and by providing support material for such interaction.

As in many countries the provisions for work placements and apprenticeship foresee that a company ensures qualified staff responsible for students' learning, nationally-coordinated effort is aimed at developing competence standards, providing training to trainers, developing and disseminating instructional materials and guidelines to schools and companies (for example, Estonia, Finland). Competence standards and training usually focus on pedagogical and transversal competences of in-company trainers as they are supposed to be competent and experienced in their professional field.

Competence profiles and the content of training programmes are developed by the education and training bodies and experts in close cooperation and involvement of the social partners who bring in the perspective of the labour market and increase the relevance of training to the world of work. National education and training authorities on the other hand bring in latest developments in education and training while education and training institutions, including from higher education, bring in latest developments in teaching and learning. National initiatives are more likely to be implemented in countries with predominantly school-based VET.

Training (usually free of charge) is entrusted to public providers, such as:

- VET providers (in Finland, for example, it is a responsibility of providers to train workplace instructors for their students);
- in-service training institutions;
- municipalities (for example, Sweden).

In **Denmark**, pedagogical training for VET trainers is provided as in-service training. The National Centre for Vocational Pedagogy (*Nationalt Center for Erhvervspædagogik – NCE*) offers a two-year diploma programme in vocational pedagogy (*Diplomuddannelsen I Erhvervspædagogik*), introduced in 2010. It is based on interaction between theory and practice (Cedefop, 2010c).

National approaches also aim at improving the cooperation between VET institutions and businesses to provide more possibilities for closer collaboration between VET teachers and in-company trainers: teachers inform trainers on relevant issues when visiting their students' workplaces (Finland, Netherlands) or during teachers' work periods in enterprises that teachers are encouraged to do (Finland) or that many countries are trying to stimulate and support.

In **Estonia**, an additional budget was allocated by the state in 2013 to improve the quality of practical training in VET and better link VET with the labour market needs. It is planned that at least 1,000 in-company trainers will have gone through training and at least 10% of teachers from VET schools will have training in companies.

One of the main challenges is the difficulty to reach out to trainers in companies. As a result, their participation in training programmes is low. Increasing the awareness of and support from companies to their trainers remains a challenge too.

With the expansion of apprenticeship within national initiatives and the [European Alliance for Apprenticeship](#) (launched in July 2013), more companies will need support to ensure the development and improvement of competences of potential apprentice tutors (masters).

(b) in lifelong learning for adults, both in employment and the unemployed

Ensuring the relevance and quality of **continuing training** supported by public funding **for the unemployed and/or adult learners in employment** stimulates efforts at national level to define competence requirements for trainers, develop qualifications and/or certification mechanisms supported by training programmes (Cyprus, Greece). In some countries, competence requirements for trainers are part of quality assurance of training providers (Czech Republic, Malta, Romania).

Based on the national competence standard, **Romania** developed a nationally standardised training programme for trainers working with adults. As of 2010, all nationally accredited training should be

delivered by trainers certified according to the standard (Cedefop, 2013b, pp.28-31). The standard is also the basis for trainer training programmes and for validating and certifying competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

Austria and the **UK** developed comprehensive initial training programmes for trainers; although they are not specifically targeted at in-company trainers, the latter can benefit from them (Cedefop, 2013b).

The initiatives are developed and implemented by national authorities, professional associations of adult educators, in-service training institutions, higher education and CVET providers.

It should be noted that the initiatives of this kind tend to address wider groups than trainers providing CVET in companies; trainers of adults are typically targeted. Trainer qualifications (adult trainer, trainer of adult education, trainer in further education and training sector, etc.) can be linked to the national qualifications framework (Ireland, UK) (Cedefop, 2013b). A better link with the work in the countries on the NQFs would open possibilities for developing and formalising qualifications of trainers in CVET and, as a result, their better professionalization ⁽²⁾. The qualifications for trainers of adults are one of the options to be considered as available for in-company trainers.

Validation of prior learning and competences acquired on the job is an important aspect of this approach too. Most initiatives include elements or well-developed systems of the assessment, validation and recognition of prior learning.

In **France**, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, the AFPA (*Association pour la formation professionnelle des adultes*, the Association for the vocational training of adults) elaborated a qualification of the trainer of adult education (*'Formateur professionnel d'adultes'*, TP FPA) at the French NQF level 3 (Level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)). This is the only professional certificate with state recognition. The qualification can be acquired through a training course or through the validation of non-formal and informal learning; many candidates are certified through the latter. The training programme for TP FPA is delivered in 12 AFPA training centres around France. It includes a 26-week course and 7 weeks of in-company training (Cedefop, 2013b, pp. 36-40 and input in the PLA in Belgium).

Training is usually provided by public bodies or VET providers as well as by adult learning providers. In some countries, training leading to a qualification can be provided by various providers, including private, who are accredited or approved by the certification authority (Ireland; Cedefop, 2013b).

As certification is voluntary in most cases, it bears certain costs, which vary significantly across countries. Most trainers in CVET, especially the self-employed, fund their own certification; however, accompanying training for national certification can be free. In some countries (Austria, Germany), eligible candidates can request public funding through professional development provisions. For those employed in companies, the employers can

⁽²⁾ As of 2013, 24 national qualifications frameworks are formally adopted, either through NQF-targeted laws or decrees or through amendments to the existing legislation: targeted NQF laws have been passed by national parliaments in Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland and Montenegro. Decrees have been adopted in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands and Portugal. Laws and decrees on NQF have been prepared – and are awaiting formal adoption – in Croatia, Finland, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden. Existing legislation has been amended in Denmark and is planned in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (Cedefop, 2013b).

bear part of or all costs, award a grant or release from work to participate in training and certification (Cedefop, 2013b).

3.2. Trainers' CPD supported by sectoral initiatives

Employers, sectoral organisations or professional associations of trainers are important partners of the state in improving the professional status of trainers in their industries and developing competence profiles and providing relevant training.

In countries with well-established apprenticeship systems, it is chambers that provide support to companies taking apprentices and sometimes 'accredit' the training companies. The chambers then provide training to apprentice tutors. The training can be based on a trainer competence standard that a chamber can develop in cooperation with VET or pedagogical experts and VET providers. In most cases, training focuses on developing pedagogical and didactic competences of trainers to enable them to work with young people and/or on acquainting them with the legal framework as regards the rights and obligations when working with the young and with the qualifications requirements in their field. Training is usually short-term and non-formal.

In **Germany**, regional chambers (*Industrie- und Handelskammer - IHKs*) offer training programmes to help candidates to prepare for the exam of trainer's aptitude and two advanced trainer qualifications ⁽³⁾ available at the national level: certified pedagogue in initial and continuing VET and certified vocational pedagogue (Cedefop, 2013, pp. 18-21). These programmes are based on the outcome-oriented curricula developed by the German Association of chambers in accordance with the national regulation. Programmes can be full-time or part-time and last from 6 to 30 months and are not mandatory. Chambers or professional associations provide courses to trainers in SMEs.

In the **Netherlands**, the Centres of Expertise accredit companies that provide work placements for students, applying a common set of quality criteria agreed among the sectors. The availability of a competent trainer is one of them. The system of accreditation is rather informal and self-regulatory. The Centres develop their own qualifications of in-company trainers. But all qualifications in the country have the same structure, which makes them powerful communication instruments among students, schools, companies, Centres of expertise, sector organisations and the government. The Centres of Expertise provide training and instructional materials to trainers in the accredited companies or in the ones that seek accreditation.

In **Austria**, quality training of trainers in enterprises is ensured through a close cooperation between companies and VET providers. It is supported by respective chambers and a VET research institute.

In **Belgium**, approximately half of the 28 sectors organise short-term or long-term training to 'godparents' (persons who welcome and support students, trainees, jobseekers and new employees in enterprises). Some small sectors even organise this training jointly (Cedefop, 2010c).

Sectoral organisations are also the ones that shape training of trainers in CVET outside national (state-funded) provision. They promote good practice and provide incentives for their members to get their competences recognised and certified. They can develop a competence standard or a qualification of a trainer for their specific sector, ensure necessary training and raise awareness of their companies about the availability of certificate. Chambers or professional associations provide courses to trainers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

⁽³⁾ Qualifications were introduced by the federal law in 2009 to improve career prospects for VET trainers. The certification is not mandatory but they are promoted by the Chambers (Cedefop, 2013b).

The content of training is based on and highly relevant to the sector needs and includes both, updating technical knowledge and skills and developing pedagogical (didactic) competences. Training programmes are developed and implemented solely by the sectoral organisations or in cooperation with training providers.

Training usually leads to an exam and certification. The certificates from these programmes can be nationally recognised or have non-formal value but be recognised by employers or professional communities in the country (Czech Republic, Italy). Employers usually perceive the certificates and training very well. In some countries, sector organisations create databases of certified trainers. Being listed in such databases (usually, on websites) is considered a seal of quality by potential clients (Austria, Germany, Slovakia) (Cedefop, 2013b).

3.3. Trainers' CPD as part of pilot projects in programmes funded by the ESF and Lifelong learning programme

The EU funding available from the ESF and the Lifelong learning programme, especially, the Leonardo da Vinci, plays an important role in developing support to CPD of VET teachers and trainers as part of pilot projects. The approach can be used nationally (national authorities, public bodies and VET providers), in specific sectors (social partners, professional associations) or by individual institutions, companies or NGOs, both in initial and continuing VET.

In Wallonia (Belgium, the case of the PLA host), the VET reform foresees common training for trainers from the different VET providers (European Commission, 2012a). Three major VET providers, Le Forem, Bruxelles Formation and IFAPME, created a partnership project, the FormaForm (*'Formation des formateurs'*) to develop and provide in-service training for their trainers. Most trainers are skilled workers and professionals who decide to train in their occupation/profession. The FormaForm is working to develop a certificate (*'label'*) of VET trainers with the purpose of recognising the VET trainer identity. It is planned to make the certificate available also to trainers in enterprises, not only in the providers. The initiative is supported with the ESF (2011-13) and will offer different tools and programmes:

- a common competence standard for trainers (core business activities common to all providers),
- a common initial training compulsory for every new trainer (10 modules, 21 days) and a CVET/CPD training programme 'à la carte';
- a catalogue of continuous training.

Pilot projects are often innovative and address gaps in the national system as regards certain competences of trainers in companies, both in IVET and CVET; therefore, they usually start with the development of a competence profile, a qualification or a certificate of a trainer. Based on these, the promoters elaborate and implement training programmes for a group of trainers in the country, region, municipality, sector, group of companies or in participating institutions. Compared to national initiatives that are usually linked to a broader agenda, pilot projects tend to focus specifically on trainers, including in-company trainers.

In **Poland**, an ESF project conducted by the Ministry of National Education aims to develop and pilot professional in-service training programmes for VET teachers and practical training instructors.

In **Lithuania**, the Association of Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts implemented a project aimed at training trainers, i.e. persons responsible for practical placement

both in training institutions and enterprises.

In **Italy**, projects supported by the ESF and the joint Inter-professional funds supporting continuing training (*Fondi interprofessionali*) aim to: enhance high competences required by technological innovations and market globalization; facilitate the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning and standardise the validation procedures and match training actions with local needs (Cedefop, 2010).

In **Estonia**, curricula for in-company trainers were developed and implemented by the Confederation of employers. Unfortunately, training stopped with the end of the project.

In **Romania**, two qualifications of trainers were developed: a trainer/tutor and a trainer of trainers.

Pilot projects, especially those that are part of the LLP, are based on the cooperation of partners from European several countries; this allows bringing in international experience and peer learning and makes it possible to take into account the lessons learnt. This helps save the time and, possibly, costs of the development of new tools.

Some projects can achieve significant results content-wise. At the same time, they usually cover a limited scope and only train a small group of trainers defined by the project promoters.

Disseminating the positive outcomes of the projects at all levels is another important factor of success. Successful projects are mainstreamed and become national initiatives or they can be further developed to transfer the developed tools to other countries and/or sectors or to train more trainers. In this case, countries provide national funding to support further implementation of CPD. Sustainability and mainstreaming successful outcomes are critical, if the use of EU funds is implied; there are cases when training is discontinued with the end of the project.

In **Cyprus**, a qualification ‘trainer of vocational training’ was developed at Level 3 of the national system of vocational qualifications (SVQ, has 5 levels) as part of an ESF project. From January 2013, it is mandatory for trainers providing VET in state-funded schemes. Training will be provided by the Human Resource Development Authority, a national agency for the promotion of vocational training and human resource development (Cedefop, 2013b).

In **Germany**, the national level qualifications of a certified pedagogue in IVET and CVET and a certified vocational pedagogue developed as a follow-up of a cooperation project of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Currently, regional chambers (IHKs) promote the qualification and offer training programmes to help candidates to prepare for the exams (Cedefop, 2013, pp. 18-21).

In **Finland**, competence profiles of and training for workplace instructors of young students were developed with the support of the ESF fund. Currently, within the Finnish Development Plan for Education and Research (2011-2016), the measures to ensure sufficient training of on-the-job instructors include: creation of a permanent funding model, alternative ways of training and nationally developed content of training.

3.4. Trainers’ CPD as part of learning and skill development strategy of individual companies

Measures to involve and support more companies in training the trainers in enterprise will definitely be explored more with the implementation of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, but not only. Getting young skilled workers through offering apprenticeship or through recruitment may be a good strategy for many companies. But it is not enough as

the existing workers also need to update skills and competences regularly. In the EU27, two-thirds (66%) of all enterprises with 10 and more employees provided continuing training to their staff in 2010 (6% increase compared to 2005), in which almost half (48%) of the employees participated (Eurostat, 2013)⁽⁴⁾. At the country level, this percentage ranged from 23 % in Poland to 87 % in Sweden and Austria. Half of the companies that provided CVET courses (55%) used internal courses where the employer defined the content and 34% use on-the-job training (Eurostat, 2013).

European enterprises tend to develop necessary competences, including general and basic skills, internally as much as possible while external provision is usually called for only for highly specialised skills. Large companies also rely on improving the competences of the existing staff rather than recruiting new staff as a general strategy to ensure the right mix of skills in companies (European Commission; Danish Technological Institute, 2012). Sometimes, though, companies have to train new employees as there is no relevant qualification in the VET system to meet their needs (based on the companies' input during the PLA). Small and medium-sized enterprises provide a bit less training (Eurostat, 2013) and depend on external support policies and instruments and on SME-friendly environments (Cedefop, 2010b).

In some countries, employees have the right for continuing training and employers have to provide training to their employees (for example, in France, this obligation is defined in the collective agreement). But there are generally no legislative requirements as regards the competences of those who provide training in companies. Therefore, professional development of in-company trainers depends entirely on the company's training policy and can only succeed if supported by employers.

In **France**, companies have to provide training to their employees as part of collective agreements and legal provision (a proportion of the payroll fund is dedicated to that). Many companies are interested in increasing returns on their investment in training. So, they motivate their trainers to take part in training programmes that are amply supplied by various providers. There are also possibilities to get one of many available trainer certificates. At the same time, there is not specific system in requirements or in provision of training.

Companies that understand that highly competent trainers ensure quality training for their employees support competence development of their trainers. Making examples of good practice known to companies can lead to better understanding and support to their trainers.

The Koskisen Oy wood company (**Finland**) developed a training programme for its trainers in cooperation with a further education institution. Not only did this help to ensure a customised programme based both on the needs of the company and on the national qualification recommendations, it also secured financial subsidies as the training is delivered by a public institution (Cedefop, 2013b; pp. 70-72). Investing in trainers resulted in increased completion of formal qualifications by its employees (not only trainers).

The Sparkassenakademie (**Austria**) trains bank employees who want to be trainers in line with the needs of the company, a competence profile is used to develop this training. The training based on a common reference tool increased the coherence of employee training across all branches of the

⁽⁴⁾ The highest proportion of enterprises providing training was in Austria, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and France; while the highest participation rate was in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Slovakia (NB: Austria and the UK that showed highest proportion of enterprises providing training had one of the lowest participation rates – 37%).

bank (Cedefop, 2013b; p.85).

Based on the input from companies during the peer learning activity in Belgium, defining competences and providing training is not enough. Continuing professional development should be supported through regular evaluation of and regular feedback on the trainers' work. A trainer needs an interlocutor in the enterprise, for example, an employer, an evaluator, with who to discuss the learning needs, relate them to the company needs and take decisions on the options for professional development. This seems to be a very important but challenging task for companies; however, very little is known on whether and how the work of in-company trainers is evaluated.

In company-level initiatives all costs are usually covered by employers (Cedefop, 2013b). Cooperation with public training providers can reduce the costs for companies if training is provided by a recognised institution.

4. Some issues for practical implementation of professional development of in-company trainers

4.1. Provision of training

Research and countries' experiences show that within different frameworks and initiatives (as discussed in Section 3) a variety of private and public institutions can provide training programmes for in-company trainers:

- trainer colleges, teacher training institutions, in-service training institutions (Austria, Poland, Slovakia);
- universities and higher education institutions (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Malta);
- public bodies (Cyprus, Denmark, Spain) or public VET providers-trainer employers (Belgium (fr), Bulgaria, Finland, France, Malta);
- municipalities (Bulgaria, Sweden);
- professional associations (Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia);
- companies (Germany, Finland);
- other providers, for example, adult learning providers (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Sweden, Ireland).

Trainer qualifications or competence standards help to ensure the coherence of the programmes provided by all the above and their learning outcomes.

There is no unified approach to the length of training programmes: it can vary within a range of 10 hours to 30 months depending on various factors: certification requirements, trainer tasks and responsibilities, type of provision (for example, modules), previous experience and qualification, content of training. The examples presented during the peer learning activities suggests a similar estimation of the optimal length of a training programme aimed at improving pedagogical and transversal competences of trainers. In most cases, it is 40 hours on average (Austria, Switzerland, Turkey). Training leading to qualifications takes a more academic approach and tends to be based on credits. Such programmes can last from 200 hours to 2 years.

4.2. Content of training

Ideally, continuing training programmes for trainers should cover all groups of competences required (see Section 2). A survey of trainers (Kirpal and Wittig, 2009)⁽⁵⁾ also showed that trainers used CPD to update various skills, most time spent on technical skills and knowledge of their subject, pedagogical skills and social skills. However, most identified initiatives so far aim to develop trainer pedagogical and transversal competences. This approach is based on the assumption that trainers are usually highly skilled and have an appropriate qualification in their specialisation (for example, a master craftsman) while lacking pedagogical, social and management competences (European Commission; Institute of technology and education, 2008). Technical knowledge and skills of in-company trainers are often taken as a given. However, maintaining and constantly updating technical knowledge of those who were removed from the production floor to training emerges as a serious concern (from the companies' input during the PLA). However, very little is known how this need can be addressed.

In **Wallonia (Belgium)**, the FormaForm (*'Formation des formateurs'*) provides training to both, their new and experienced instructors. The core training programme is compulsory for all new trainers (instructors): to get acquainted with the new working environment and with the basics of pedagogy for adults. The CPD training covers 10 modules for core competences provided by the Formaform and 15 mostly outsourced continuing training modules. Yearly, every trainer has the opportunity to have 15 days of in-service (technical, pedagogical or didactical) training.

The competence profile, common for all the participating providers, is based on eight key activities and relevant competences:

- positioning in the organisational framework;
- developing training programmes;
- developing, implementing and facilitating training activities;
- evaluating the acquisition;
- evaluating and adapting the programme
- and managing one's own professional development.

In **France**, training for tutors in alternating training (initial VET) mainly provides an understanding of the regulations governing alternating training, and basic skills in developing and evaluating training programmes.

In **Finland**, the training programme for workplace instructors includes three modules (3 credits): planning of workplace training, vocational skills demonstrations and competence tests; student instruction and assessment of learning; assessment of a student's or a candidate's competence.

4.3. Reaching out to trainers in companies and motivating them to participate in CPD

The survey of trainers (Kirpal and Wittig, 2009) showed that most trainers participate in continuing professional development (87%), with two-thirds (60%) on their own initiative. Those who do not participate see as main barriers to their participation the lack of:

- available training opportunities,
- access to training programmes,
- incentives,
- support from the employer.

⁽⁵⁾ The survey was conducted by Network of trainers in Europe. About 700 responses from 28 EU countries were received, 32.5% of respondents worked in private companies. The survey had an explorative character but its results point to some trends and possible ways of intervention and to the need to have more input from actual trainers to get a clearer picture of the situation.

These barriers need to be addressed by the initiatives to support trainers CPD.

It should be noted that participation in CPD is strongly linked to the professional identity issue of in-company trainers (especially skilled workers who train other employees). They usually have strong identity with their field but not with trainer professional community. In the survey mentioned above, less than a quarter of respondents reported being a member of a professional body representing trainers' interests. That is why they are hard to reach for trainer-targeted programmes. They are neither informed nor do they look for information about the available opportunities for certification, validation of competences acquired on the job, and professional development.

Several approaches can help engage in-company trainers into learning:

(a) increasing relevance of content of training to the needs of trainers and strengthening the link with their real working contexts and tasks

Most job profiles and tasks of trainers are centred on the delivery of training and slightly less on the design and organisation of training activities, so trainers definitely need to master modern methods and techniques. They also need to update their technical skills and competences. In some countries professional sectors provide continuing training to employees on payroll (Belgium) while local authorities support training for the benefit of the local companies. Such provisions can be used to cover the learning needs of trainers in companies, especially SMEs, but very little information is available on this kind of CPD.

In **Spain**, the National Public Employment Service draws up an annual advanced technical training plan for CVET teachers in employment centres to bring their technical and pedagogical competencies up to date. This plan is built in cooperation with their Provincial Directorates, the Autonomous Communities and the National Employment Centres.

Gradual acquisition of competences (additional or more advanced) as trainers gain experience and the link of training content to real working environment and real problems are important and beneficial. It makes benefits more visible to companies and stimulates effective cooperation of business and VET (Cedefop, 2013b).

In **Austria**, the WBA higher level qualification requires that each candidate's thesis is linked to their work as adult educators. Transfer assignments are part of the Professional teaching and training programme (PPT) at the Danube University. Students have to apply the acquired content in their working environment (Cedefop, 2013b).

(b) making the validation of prior learning an integral part of continuing professional development of in-company trainers

Trainers work in very dynamic environments where they acquire a lot of useful experience that cannot be readily provided through training programmes. Validation helps to acknowledge their existing competences and identify better their learning needs (for example, whether they need to acquire new pedagogical methods, learning psychology, group management, multicultural awareness, conflict resolution, course design). Validation can serve as a basis for exemption from some parts of certification or training and, thus,

make the trainers' pathway to a qualification shorter (Cedefop, 2013b), should they wish to acquire one.

In **Greece**, to get certified, trainers can choose from three possible paths:

- (a) self-assessment and immediate certification;
- (b) guidance on whether to follow a training programme or some modules and then certification;
- (c) a training programme and certification. Experienced trainers do not have to undertake training (Cedefop, 2013b, pp. 22-24).

Experiencing the validation of non-formal and informal learning can be a hands-on learning experience for trainers, which they can apply in their work. They would learn how to work with competence and/or occupational standards, to assess learner competences and skills against such standards and to identify gaps that should be closed through training. In this way, trainers would be able to help their companies create a stronger link between their internal competence assessment to the public validation processes (a challenge identified by a forthcoming Cedefop's study on Validation of non-formal and informal learning in European enterprises).

(c) developing responsibility for one's own learning and professional development (including setting it as a requirement in competence standards)

The survey of trainers (Kirpal and Wittig, 2009) showed that the main driver for continuing learning was their intrinsic motivation to be a better trainer. This finding points to the potential readiness of trainers to take responsibility for their continuing professional development, the competence most critical for lifelong learning in general.

In most countries, attendance of CPD is voluntary (Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary (CVET), Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia). In some countries, mainly teachers and trainers in school-based schemes have to update their competences on a regular basis.

- In **Wallonia** (Belgium), teachers and trainers in IVET are obliged to update their vocational knowledge and competence.
- In **Lithuania**, each teacher in IVET must upgrade his/her qualification and is entitled to five days of continuing training per year.
- In **Bulgaria**, all teaching staff, including trainers, should participate in CPD; they have the right to use 30 calendar days every third year for professional development as paid training leave.
- In **Hungary**, teachers and trainers in public institutions have to undertake in-service training at least once in seven years (80% of costs covered by the state).
- In **Czech Republic**, continuing vocational training of IVET instructors is compulsory within the company in which they are employed and for the qualification which they need for the job but not for trainer's activities (Cedefop, 2010c).
- In **Germany**, receiving certification from the BDVT, trainers (working mainly in CVET) adhere to constant update of competences (though it is not required by any regulation) (Cedefop, 2013b, pp. 45-48).

Competence profiles (standards) that have been analysed so far include such competence as 'reflection on one's work, responsibility for and capacity to identify learning and development need and follow it up' (train the trainer qualification, Ireland; Cedefop, 2013b, pp. 32-35). Validation procedures also promote reflective practice through setting individual

learning paths, which at the same time require a lot of commitment on the part of candidates (Greece, France).

Another effective way of ensuring that trainers maintain and update their competences is the renewal of certificates: some certificates are limited in duration and need to be renewed after three or five years (for example, certified trainers in Greece; WBA certificate in Austria, Cedefop, 2013b).

(d) applying the learning outcomes approach

The learning outcomes principle has been broadly accepted in Europe (Cedefop, 2013a) as the development of national qualification frameworks (NQFs) shows. Apart from the impact on the trainers' work, their own qualifications might get a higher value and bring them closer to their academic counterparts; placing the German master craftsman (one of the qualifications that an apprentice tutor can have) at the same qualification level as an academic Bachelor is a promising example of the benefits of this approach.

An interesting possibility is emerging from the developments in NQFs. Some countries (Belgium (potentially), Netherlands, Sweden) are opening up their NQFs to privately provided or non-formal qualifications. For example, in the Netherlands, if a provider, for example a private company, wants to submit a qualification for inclusion, an accreditation (or in Dutch 'validation') has to take place. This can give additional value to training provided in companies, increase its comparability at the European level and link to the labour market reality and to the work of in-company trainers.

The learning outcomes approach helps ensure more coherence among various providers; supports flexibility and validation of prior learning. The shift in focus from what programme or institution a person attended to what a person knows, is able to do and understands opens opportunities for more flexible routes to qualifications for in-company trainers. It can also increase the attractiveness of continuing training to employees who train part-time in companies.

The survey of trainers (Kirpal and Wittig, 2009) showed that trainers use different ways and modes for continuing learning: individual self-study being most frequently used (20%); participation in conferences, development days and events (18.5%); work experience (17%); formal courses (16%); e-learning (13%); learning in a team (8%). Different ways of acquiring necessary competences should be explored and recognised.

Learning outcome-based trainer competence standards facilitate modular provision of CPD for in-company trainers (in modules and units of various length and amount). Modular/incremental CPD should be possible to be accumulated towards a trainer (or teacher, depending on the context) qualification.

In **Ireland**, for example, the award of the FETAC Train the Trainer certificate depends on demonstrating the relevant learning outcomes rather than completing certain training; different training providers can adapt their programmes based on the specific needs of their learners (Cedefop, 2013b, pp. 32-35).

(e) targeted promotion and dissemination of information on available programmes and benefits of learning

Raising awareness about available options for training, validation and certification, even if it is voluntary, its outcomes and benefits among training practitioners, companies, social partners and sectoral organisations, and professional associations is very important to ensure good take-up and acceptance. Experience so far shows that certification procedures

despite growing interest are used mainly by the training (lifelong learning) sector, not much by trade, services and industry (Cedefop, 2013b).

Organisations use various promotion and dissemination channels, such as training catalogues, websites, professional networks, social networks, circulating materials, newsletters, and participation in sectoral trade fairs (Cedefop, 2013b).

5. Guiding principles for providing and supporting continuing professional development of vocational trainers in enterprises

- (1) Continuing professional development of in-company trainers serves to improve the work of trainers and/or to get a qualification, either required by the legislation or not. It should enable them to fulfil their role of developing the right skills for companies' better productivity and innovation. Continuing professional development is best planned and provided if supported by competence standards (profiles) that help identify learning needs of individual trainers and levels of competences they need.
- (2) If there are legally stipulated competence or qualification requirements, training programmes to acquire them should be ensured by the state (either through public providers or through accrediting various providers). Without such requirements (which is a more typical situation in most countries), not every trainer would seek a qualification. As trainers play an important role in keeping the workforce competences up-to-date, they should have opportunities for updating competences and for getting a recognised certificate. Policy action should support creating and expanding opportunities for certification and validation of trainers' prior learning and competences acquired at work as valid alternatives to formal training. Validation should be an integral part of all CPD activities for trainers.
- (3) Continuing professional development should cover all areas of competence: technical, both new and changed competences due to technological, business and social changes, pedagogical and core competences (for example, transversal). Pedagogical competences are a central concern of most of the examples analysed. The frequency of updating should also be considered.
- (4) Cooperation and shared responsibility of the world of education and training and the world of work is important. National, regional and local authorities, sectoral organisations and branches, VET providers, social partners and companies should look for ways to exchange their views (for example, through sectoral councils) and priorities, synchronise their efforts and distribute responsibilities and provision of training opportunities in a most effective and efficient way. Funding of CPD should also be a shared responsibility.
 - a. National education and training authorities can provide to the labour market players (for example, employers) insights into the latest policy developments and priorities in VET, especially useful for bottom-up initiatives.
 - b. The pedagogical and methodological expertise of education and training institutions can help sectoral organisations/branches and companies identify learning needs; design customised training programmes; assess and validate employee competences. Different learning opportunities, including those available for VET teachers as well as for adult educators, should be exploited and brought to the attention of trainers in enterprises.

- c. The development of some competences (citizenship, multicultural awareness) should be supported by public funding as social responsibility.
 - d. In-company trainers should be aware and be able to use the benefits of financial incentives for lifelong learning available in their countries.
- (5) In-company trainers should be among the target groups for awareness raising and learning about national qualification frameworks; learning outcomes approach; mobility and cooperation opportunities provided by European programmes (for example, the Lifelong learning programme and the new [Erasmus for all](#)). The opportunities to link the development of trainers' competence standards to the development of national qualification frameworks should be better explored and used.
- a. The developments in the national qualification frameworks and the related shift to the learning outcomes approach affect the work of trainers in companies as they need to be aware of qualification requirements and focus on the knowledge, skills and competences that trainees need to acquire, rather than on spending certain time in training (Cedefop, 2013b).
 - b. Cross-sectoral approach, focusing on pedagogical and transversal competences can be applied to strengthen the trainer identity and overcome possible sectoral differences and variations in terms of technical skills and competence requirements.
 - c. Mobility and/or cooperation projects can serve as another way of developing trainer competences and learning from peers across Europe.
- (6) Continuing professional development of in-company trainers should be part of their regular professional activities. Trainers are potentially prepared to take responsibility for their lifelong learning and, in general, dedicate time to updating their competences. Policy action and initiatives of various players (sectoral organisations, employers and trainers' associations) should aim at developing a lifelong learning culture of in-company trainers who can become role models for their trainees. It is important to bring information on all initiatives together and make all parties aware of what others are doing. Trainers should be aware of, have access to and support for all opportunities of CPD.
- (7) Supporting continuing professional development of in-company trainers at different levels and through different channels is likely to bring the biggest returns in terms of companies' productivity, competitiveness and innovation. It would also enhance social benefits of training, such as contributing to social inclusion. It can be achieved within a broader context of employers' understanding the benefits of training and the role of trainers in ensuring its high quality. However, the role of companies is crucial. The work on developing and increasing support to CPD of trainers cannot go separately from serious awareness-raising work of informing companies of benefits of training to companies' productivity, innovation and growth.
- (8) Reliance on ESF and other external funding raises the issue of sustainability of effort. As substantial funds are used for developing and implementing training programmes for in-company trainers, sustainability actions plans and mainstreaming of the programmes need to be given proper attention. In Finland, the national Development plan for education and research 2011-16 foresees to explore the

possibilities for a permanent funding model for training workplace instructors as well as for alternative ways of providing such training.

- (9) Competence development and update of training staff (full-time and part-time) should be an integral part of comprehensive policies aimed at getting young people on the labour market and continuing vocational training of adults already in employment as well as the unemployed. Support to the work of trainers in companies and workplace instructors and provision of relevant training should be linked closely to quality assurance measures for learning in the workplace. Speaking more broadly, this should be part of the lifelong learning strategies and policies in the countries. Future cooperation of the Member States in education and training and in employment should embrace the issue as well.

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List of terms used in the text ⁽⁶⁾

Accreditation of an education or training provider: process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.

Assessment: the process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification. In literature, assessment generally refers to appraisal of individuals whereas evaluation is more frequently used to describe appraisal of education and training methods or providers.

Certification: the process of issuing a certificate, diploma or title formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual have been assessed and validated by a competent body against a predefined standard.

Competence: proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development; or ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). Competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Continuing education and training: education and training after initial education and training or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge and skills, to acquire new skills for a career move or retraining, or to continue their personal and/or professional development.

Knowledge: the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual (e.g. programming languages, design tools).

Learning outcome(s): set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of learning process, formal, non-formal or informal.

Lifelong learning: all learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

Qualification: formal qualification: the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work.

Regulated profession: an occupational activity access to which is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific qualifications.

Skill: an ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European qualifications framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

⁽⁶⁾ Sources: Cedefop (2011). Glossary: Quality in education and training. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17663.aspx> and Cedefop (2008). Terminology of European education and training policy. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4064_en.pdf [accessed on 21.7.2012.]

Skill gap: A situation in which the level of skills of the currently employed is less than that required to perform the job adequately or the type of skill does not match the requirements of the job.

Skill mismatch: A situation in which the level of education or skills is less or more than the required level of education or skills.

Skill shortage: A situation in which the demand for a particular type of skill exceeds the supply of available people with that skill.

Validation: confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Work-based learning: acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks in a vocational context, either at the workplace or in a VET institution.