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STUDY ON THE REPRESENTATION OF APPRENTICES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) Final Report

Written by ICF S.A.
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**Study on the representation
of apprentices in vocational
education and training (VET)
and other relevant bodies or
networks of EU Member
States, Candidate and EFTA
Countries**

Final Report

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Executive summary

For many years, policy makers at national levels have introduced a range of measures to ensure quality apprenticeships as a successful pathway for young people in the transition from school-to-work. While acknowledging the national responsibility and great diversity of apprenticeships schemes across Europe, the European Union has put apprenticeships high on its political agenda. In March 2018 the Council of the EU adopted the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships¹ (EFQEA). Its objective is to increase the employability and personal development of young and adult apprentices and to contribute to the development of a highly skilled and qualified workforce, responsive to labour market needs. Within this framework, *apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that:*

- a) combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces;*
- b) lead to nationally recognised qualifications;*
- c) are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution, and*
- d) with the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the work-based component.*

In addition, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)², seeks to engage governments, social partners and other key stakeholders³ in pursuing common objectives of strengthening the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships and the mobility of apprentices in Europe. Although European youth organisations contribute to the EAfA, no organisation specifically representing apprentices is a member of the EAfA⁴.

Until recently, there have been limited opportunities for apprentices to contribute to discussions related to apprenticeship policy at European level and make their voices heard. In response, the European Commission (DG EMPL) initiated the European Apprentice Network (EAN) in 2017 to represent the voice of apprentices – amongst other aspects. Although the EAN is still a relatively new network, it is regarded for its contribution to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy, particularly in relation to the EAfA.

At national level, there is limited evidence of structures in place to represent apprentices. Where apprentice representation structures are in place - within work-based systems, representation is mainly implemented via work councils and/or trade unions. In school-based systems, apprentice representation is implemented via school councils and/or by a range of other bodies (e.g. consulting bodies, VET associations, social partners). Though this represents a general overview of apprentice representation structures, little is known about how apprentices are engaged and consulted on the development, implementation and governance of apprenticeships.

¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)

² Launched in July 2013 by the European Commission in close cooperation with EU social partners

³ Businesses, chambers of commerce/craft/industry and professional networks, vocational education and training (VET) providers, non-profit and youth/parents organisations as well as national/regional authorities, research institutes and think tanks

⁴ Although OBESSU and the YFJ represent apprentices as part of their wider portfolio

The main objectives of this study were to:

1. undertake a mapping of the representation of apprentices in the different bodies⁵ in the targeted countries;
2. draw conclusions and make suggestions for action on how representation could be further developed and strengthened at national level and in which way, the European level could support it;
3. draw conclusions and make suggestions for action on how the European Apprentices Network (EAN) could further grow to enhance its added value in the relationship between national developments and the European policy debate.

Summary of method

This study involved the mapping of apprentice representation structures across **37 countries** including all EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA countries⁶. Data collection combined the review of websites, policy documents and other relevant sources, and 79 semi-structured interviews with representatives of apprentice representation structures, policy makers, social partners and other relevant stakeholders at the national level. Four case studies were undertaken to analyse four apprentice representation structures in more detail. These covered Denmark, Netherlands, Australia and Canada.

To inform the current state of play of the EAN and provide suggestions for its future role, interviews were undertaken with 15 EAN members and support staff and five representatives from European level organisations. The analysis was complemented with insights gained from country-level interviews undertaken as part of the mapping of apprentice representation structures at national level. Data collection took place between January and March 2019.

Key findings

In relation to the mapping of apprentice representation structures, the main findings of the study are:

- In total, **68 structures involved in apprentice representation were identified**. The type of representation structures varies significantly across countries. This study has classified them into three different types as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Apprentice representation structures in European countries

Type		Coverage	Number of structures	Countries
I.	Direct representation	Apprentices	6	AT, DE, DK, ES, FR, UK
		VET students	7	DK, FI, NL, NO
II.	Indirect representation: wider-scope	Representation of (secondary) students or youth	24	BEnl, BEfr, HR, IE, IT, LU, LV, PT, SI, RO, UK, CH, IS, LI, NMK, No, RS

⁵ As indicated in the Terms of Reference, the term 'bodies' refers to: "VET bodies and other bodies or networks relevant to the governance of VET systems, in particular apprenticeship schemes, whether formal or informal".

⁶ Candidate countries (AL, ME, Northern Macedonia, RS, and TR), EFTA countries (CH, IS, LI and NO).

Type		Coverage	Number of structures	Countries
		Representation of employees/professionals		
III.	Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies	Other (Incl. consulting bodies at national, regional or local level; associations of VET schools and social partners; and other entities.)	31	BEfr, CZ, CY, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, LT, SE, SI, SK, RO, UK, CH, NO, NMK, TU

No relevant structures have been identified in Bulgaria, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Albania⁷ and Montenegro.

This study has identified relevant structures (described in more depth in the country factsheets) but has not provided an analysis of their relevance/functioning in the national systems. In addition, this study has not made any proposals in which way these structures would delegate a representative to the EAN (which remains under national competence, including the social partners, where appropriate). This is valid for all structures presented in the three typologies above.

- This study shows that apprentices' interests are better safeguarded through structures that represent apprentices directly or VET students overall. Currently, only a limited number of European countries has in place such structures. As shown in Table 2, this includes:

Table 2. Direct apprentice representation structures in European countries

Direct representation (coverage)	Structures
Apprentices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria: Youth representatives in trade unions at company, regional and national levels (Union of Private Sector Employees, Printing, Journalism, and Paper, and other trade unions) • Germany: Youth and apprentice representatives (JAV) in trade unions at company, regional and national levels (German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), United Services Trade Union (Ver.di), and other smaller unions) • Denmark: Apprentice representatives in trade unions. Several unions • Spain: Spanish Apprentices Network "We are dual VET"⁸ • France: National association of apprentices of France (ANAF) • UK: National Society of Apprentices (NSoA)
VET students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denmark: Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union; School local education committees

⁷ The Albanian Alliance for Apprenticeships exists but no further information related to apprentice representation has been identified at the time the study was undertaken.

⁸ The scope of this network is the regions of Andalusia, Catalonia and Madrid. It is not within the national governance arrangements for apprenticeship schemes but rather operates to promote apprenticeships

Direct representation (coverage)	Structures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finland: Finnish national union for students in vocational upper secondary schools (OSKU); National Union of Vocational Students in Finland (SAKKI)• Netherlands: National School Student Union of the Netherlands focusing on VET (JOB)• Norway: National Council for VET (apprentice representative); Councils for the vocational programmes at upper secondary level (apprentice representatives)

- In wider-scope structures (i.e. representing a wider group of students, young people or professionals), there is often little information on apprentices' level of participation, and there is some evidence that they are not necessarily well-represented. Also, agendas are likely to be dominated by non-apprenticeship related topics.
- In structures that indirectly represent apprentices by means of consultation through wider bodies, consultation is often not systematic and sometimes apprentices' views are only collected indirectly through the testimonies of employers or VET school staff.
- A first step towards strengthening apprentice participation across Europe is to promote the benefits and share experience of good practices on the level of participation of apprentices in existing structures at national, regional and organisational level.
- National and regional governments and organisations (student associations and unions, youth organisations, trade unions, VET providers, and companies) need to have a better understanding of the barriers to participation to be able to act on them.
- Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities are likely to help increase participation across European countries. In some countries, more specific changes such as legal reforms may also be needed.
- At the organisational level, there need to be measures to ensure that all apprentices have access to representation structures and that they participate at the same level as other groups (other students, young people, young workers or employees).
- Beyond participation, it is important to ensure apprentice representation in decision-making processes related to the governance of apprenticeships. Having clear representation mechanisms motivates the development of representation structures by giving them a sense of purpose.

In relation to the EAN and its future development, the main findings of the study are:

- The EAN has made a good start. It is recognised for its contribution to EU priorities related to apprenticeship policy, particularly in relation to the EAfA, the seven priorities of the EAN, and the European Youth Forum's Position on Quality Apprenticeships.
- The EAN is perceived as a dynamic network, serving as ambassadors for apprenticeships. Their voluntary contribution to the EAN and its activities are commended.
- There is consensus between interviewees to strengthen the governance structure of the EAN. Suggestions put forward include a dedicated secretariat

and 'formal mandate' – though there is no clear view on what a 'formal mandate' comprises. There is some support for the EAN to hold similar status to that of OBESSU and the EYF.

- The existing composition of EAN members is not fully representative of different age categories, gender, organisational types and geographical coverage.
- The role of the EAN at European and national levels could be promoted further by improving the EAN's existing communication channels. Additional financial resources and capacity are considered desirable in this respect.
- The frequency of the EAfA meetings and time available for EAN members to meet is considered limited. The lack of additional activities in between EAfA meetings means that momentum is sometimes lost. Due to the fact EAN meetings are held alongside EAfA meetings, not all EAN members are able to attend EAN meetings in person due to work commitments.
- Ensuring EAN members are suitably experienced and have access to relevant training could help enhance the role of the EAN as a centre of expertise.
- There is clear support for the EAN becoming an umbrella organisation comprising of apprentice representatives from all countries across Europe. The EAN has the potential to be part of a wider approach to developing the representation of VET learners more broadly.
- There is consensus for the EAN contributing the development of apprentice representation structures across the EU, raising awareness, sharing best practice and facilitating peer learning activities.

Acronyms

ANAF	National association of apprentices of France
ARES	Academy of Research and Higher Education in Belgium-Wallonia
EAN	European Apprentices Network
EafA	European Alliance for Apprenticeships
EFQEA	European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EYF	European Youth Forum
JAV	Youth and apprentice representatives in German trade unions
JOB	National School Student Union of the Netherlands
NSoA	National Society of Apprentices in the UK
OSKU	Finnish national union for students in vocational upper secondary schools
UNISON	Public service trade union
OAED	Labour Force Employment Organisation in Greece
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions
OPSO	VET providers' association with a focus on apprenticeships in Finland
SAN	Spanish Apprentices Network
SAKKI	National Union of Vocational Students in Finland
SEMTA	The Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance in the UK
SIF	Icelandic Upper Secondary School Student Union
SSUN	School Student Union of Norway
VSK	Flemish student umbrella organisation in Belgium-Flanders

Country codes

AL	Albania
AT	Austria
BEFR	Belgium Wallonia
BENL	Belgium Flanders
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain

*Study on the representation of apprentices in vocational education and training (VET)
and other relevant bodies or networks of EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA
Countries*

FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
ME	Montenegro
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
NMK	North Macedonia ⁹
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RS	Serbia
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
TR	Turkey
UK	The United Kingdom

⁹ In February 2019 the official renaming of Macedonia to North Macedonia was adopted.

Zusammenfassung

Seit vielen Jahren ergreifen nationale politische Entscheidungsträger Maßnahmen, die eine hochwertige Lehrlingsausbildung und somit einen erfolgreichen Übergang junger Menschen von der Schule in den Beruf gewährleisten sollen. Die Europäische Union ist sich der Eigenverantwortlichkeit der Mitgliedsstaaten und der Vielfalt der Ausbildungssysteme in Europa bewusst, hat aber dennoch die Lehrlingsausbildung hoch auf ihre politische Agenda gesetzt. Im März 2018 billigte der Rat der Europäischen Union den Europäischen Rahmen für eine hochwertige und nachhaltige Lehrlingsausbildung¹⁰ (EFQEA), dessen Ziel es ist, die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit und die persönliche Entwicklung junger und erwachsener Auszubildender zu fördern und zur Entstehung einer kompetenten und qualifizierten Arbeitnehmerschaft beizutragen, die den Bedarf des Arbeitsmarktes decken kann. Innerhalb dieses Rahmens *sind Lehrlingsausbildungen Systeme der formalen Berufsbildung:*

- a) die das Lernen in Bildungs- und Ausbildungseinrichtungen mit solidem Lernen am Arbeitsplatz in einem Unternehmen und an anderen Arbeitsstätten kombinieren,*
- b) die zu national anerkannten Qualifikationen führen,*
- c) die auf einer Vereinbarung beruhen, in der die Rechte und Pflichten des Auszubildenden, des Arbeitgebers und gegebenenfalls der Bildungs- und Ausbildungseinrichtung festgelegt sind, und*
- d) bei denen der Auszubildende bezahlt oder auf andere Weise für die berufspraktische Komponente entschädigt wird.*

Die Europäische Ausbildungsallianz (EAfA)¹¹ versucht überdies, Regierungen, Sozialpartner und andere wichtige Interessengruppen¹² dazu aufzurufen, gemeinsame Ziele zu stecken und Angebot, Qualität und Image der Lehrlingsausbildung sowie die Mobilität von Auszubildenden in Europa zu stärken. Europäische Jugendorganisationen leisten einen Beitrag zur Europäischen Ausbildungsallianz, allerdings ist keine der Organisationen, die speziell Auszubildende vertreten, Mitglied der EAfA¹³.

Bis vor Kurzem hatten Auszubildende nur wenig Gelegenheit, sich Gehör zu verschaffen und an den ausbildungspolitischen Diskussionen auf europäischer Ebene teilzunehmen. Aus diesem Grund gründete die Europäische Kommission (GD EMPL) im Jahr 2017 ein europäisches Netzwerk für Auszubildende (European Apprentice Network, EAN), das unter anderem die Interessen von Auszubildenden vertreten soll. Das EAN ist zwar ein relativ neues Netzwerk, wird aber wegen seines Beitrags zu den EU-Prioritäten im Bereich der Lehrlingsausbildung, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die EAfA, geschätzt.

Auf nationaler Ebene gibt es nur wenige Hinweise auf Strukturen, die die Interessen Auszubildender vertreten. Wo solche Strukturen im Rahmen arbeitsbasierter Systeme tatsächlich existieren, erfolgt die Vertretung in erster Linie über Betriebsräte und/oder Gewerkschaften. In schulbasierten Systemen wird die Auszubildendenvertretung über Schulräte und/oder verschiedene andere Organe (z. B. Beratungsstellen, Verbände für berufliche Aus- und Weiterbildung, Sozialpartner) organisiert. Hierbei handelt es sich um allgemeiner Überblick über die Strukturen, die der Auszubildendenvertretung

¹⁰ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=DE](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=DE)

¹¹ Im Juli 2013 von der Europäischen Kommission in enger Zusammenarbeit mit den europäischen Sozialpartnern gegründet.

¹² Unternehmen, Industrie- und Handelskammern, Handwerkskammern und professionelle Netzwerke, Anbieter beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung, gemeinnützige und Jugend-/Elternorganisationen sowie nationale/regionale Behörden, Forschungsinstitute und Denkfabriken.

¹³ Obwohl OBESSU und das EJM im Rahmen ihrer allgemeinen Aufgabenstellung auch Auszubildende vertreten.

dienen, jedoch ist nur wenig darüber bekannt, auf welche Weise Auszubildende bei Gestaltung, Durchführung und Verwaltung der Lehrlingsausbildung konsultiert und einbezogen werden.

Die Studie hatte die folgenden Ziele:

1. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der Auszubildendenvertretung in den verschiedenen Organen¹⁴ der untersuchten Länder vorzunehmen.
2. Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen und Empfehlungen auszusprechen, wie die Vertretung auf nationaler Ebene weiterentwickelt und gestärkt und auf europäischer Ebene unterstützt werden kann.
3. Schlussfolgerungen zu ziehen und Empfehlungen auszusprechen, wie das europäische Netzwerk für Auszubildende (European Apprentice Network, EAN) weiter wachsen und seinen Mehrwert in der Beziehung zwischen nationalen Entwicklungen und der europäischen Grundsatzdebatte steigern kann.

Überblick über die Studienmethode

Die vorliegende Studie beinhaltet eine Bestandsaufnahme der Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung in **37 Ländern**, d. h. in sämtlichen EU-Mitgliedstaaten und den Bewerber- und EFTA-Ländern¹⁵. Für die Datensammlung wurden Websites, Grundsatzdokumente und andere relevante Quellen herangezogen sowie 79 Leitfadeninterviews mit Vertretern von Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung, Entscheidungsträgern, Sozialpartnern und anderen relevanten Interessengruppen auf nationaler Ebene geführt. In Dänemark, den Niederlanden, Australien und Kanada wurde zudem je eine Fallstudie durchgeführt, um vier verschiedene Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung genauer zu analysieren.

Um ein detaillierteres Bild der derzeitigen Situation des EAN zu erhalten und Empfehlungen für dessen zukünftige Rolle aussprechen zu können, wurden Interviews mit 15 Mitgliedern und Mitarbeitern des EAN sowie mit fünf Vertretern europäischer Organisationen geführt. Vervollständigt wurde die Analyse durch Informationen, die im Verlauf der Bestandsaufnahme bei landesspezifischen Gesprächen über nationale Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung gesammelt wurden. Die Datensammlung erfolgte zwischen Januar und März 2019.

¹⁴ Gemäß der Leistungsbeschreibung bezieht sich der Begriff „Organe“ auf „Organe der beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildung sowie auf andere für die Verwaltung der beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildungssysteme relevante Organe und Netzwerke, insbesondere formale oder informelle Programme für die Lehrlingsausbildung“.

¹⁵ Bewerberländer (AL, ME, Nordmazedonien, RS und TR), EFTA-Länder (CH, IS, LI und NO).

Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse

Die **Bestandsaufnahme der Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung** ergab Folgendes:

- Insgesamt wurden **68 Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung ermittelt**. Die Art der Vertretungsstruktur war von Land zu Land sehr unterschiedlich. Für den Zweck der Studie wurden sie, wie in Tabelle 3 (Table 3) gezeigt, in drei verschiedene Kategorien unterteilt.

Table 3. Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung in europäischen Ländern

Art	Zielgruppe	Zahl der Strukturen	Länder	
I.	Direkte Vertretung	Auszubildende	6	AT, DE, DK, ES, FR, UK
		Lernende in beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung	7	DK, FI, NL, NO
II.	Indirekte Vertretung: breitere Zielgruppen	Vertretung von Sekundarschülern oder Jugendlichen	24	BE _{nl} , BE _{fr} , HR, IE, IT, LU, LV, PT, SI, RO, UK, CH, IS, LI, NMK, No, RS
		Vertretung von Angestellten/Fachkräften		
III.	Indirekte Vertretung: Konsultation über allgemeinere Organe	Sonstige (inkl. Beratungsstellen auf nationaler, regionaler oder lokaler Ebene; Verbände von aus- und weiterbildenden Schulen und Sozialpartnern sowie sonstige Organe)	31	BE _{fr} , CZ, CY, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, LT, SE, SI, SK, RO, UK, CH, NO, NMK, TU

In Bulgarien, Ungarn, Malta, Polen, Albanien¹⁶ und Montenegro wurden keine einschlägigen Strukturen ermittelt.

Im Rahmen der Studie wurden relevante Strukturen ermittelt, die in den länderspezifischen Informationsblättern ausführlicher beschrieben sind. Ihre Bedeutung/Funktionsweise innerhalb der nationalen Systeme wurde allerdings nicht analysiert. Auch enthält die Studie keinerlei Vorschläge, auf welche Weise diese Strukturen einen Vertreter an das EAN entsenden können (was weiterhin in den Zuständigkeitsbereich der Länder und gegebenenfalls der Sozialpartner fällt). Dies trifft auf alle drei der oben genannten Strukturarten zu.

- Die Studie zeigt, dass die Interessen von Auszubildenden effektiver vertreten werden, wenn die zuständigen Organe die Auszubildenden direkt oder Lernende in beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung allgemein vertreten. Solche Organe sind

¹⁶ Es existiert eine albanische Auszubildendenallianz (Albanian Alliance for Apprenticeships), doch wurden hierzu vor Abschluss der Studie keine weiteren Informationen ermittelt.

derzeit nur in einer begrenzten Zahl europäischer Länder vorhanden. Wie in Tabelle 4 (Table 4) gezeigt, gehören dazu:

Table 4. Strukturen mit direkter Auszubildendenvertretung in europäischen Ländern

Direkte Vertretung Zielgruppe	Strukturen
Auszubildende	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Österreich: Jugendvertreter in Gewerkschaften auf betrieblicher, regionaler und nationaler Ebene (Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten, Druck, Journalismus, Papier sowie andere Gewerkschaften) • Deutschland: Jugend- und Auszubildendenvertretung (JAV) in Gewerkschaften auf betrieblicher, regionaler und nationaler Ebene (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund [DGB], Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft [Ver.di] und andere kleinere Gewerkschaften) • Dänemark: Auszubildendenvertretung in Gewerkschaften. Mehrere Verbände. • Spanien: Spanisches Netzwerk für Auszubildende „Somos FP Dual“ („Wir sind duale Berufsausbildung“)¹⁷ • Frankreich: Association Nationale des Apprentis de France (ANAF) (Nationaler Auszubildendenverband Frankreichs) • VK: National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) (Nationale Auszubildendenvereinigung)
Lernende in beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dänemark: Erhvervsskolernes Elevorganisation (EEO) (Schülerverband an Berufsschulen); lokale Schulbildungsausschüsse • Finnland: Suomen Opiskelija-Allianssi (OSKU) (Finnische nationale Vereinigung von Berufsschülern der Sekundarstufe II); Suomen Ammattiin Opiskelevien Liitto (SAKKI) (Nationale Vereinigung finnischer Berufsschüler) • Niederlande: Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs (JOB) (Niederländische Vereinigung von Berufsschülern) • Norwegen: Nationaler Rat für berufliche Aus- und Weiterbildung (Auszubildendenvertreter); Räte für Berufsausbildungsprogramme der Sekundarstufe II (Auszubildendenvertreter)

- Im Fall von Strukturen, die für allgemeinere Zielgruppen zuständig sind (d. h. Vertretung von Schülern/Studenten, Jugendlichen bzw. jungen Fachkräften), gibt es oft nur wenige Informationen über den Beteiligungsgrad von Auszubildenden. Zudem gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass sie nicht zwangsläufig gut vertreten werden. Überdies wird die Agenda wahrscheinlich von Themen dominiert, die nicht in Zusammenhang mit der Lehrlingsausbildung stehen.
- In Strukturen, die Auszubildende indirekt durch Konsultation und über allgemeine Organe vertreten, erfolgt diese Konsultation oftmals nicht auf systematische Weise, und manchmal werden die Ansichten der Auszubildenden nur indirekt anhand von Aussagen der Arbeitgeber oder des Berufsschulpersonals gesammelt.

¹⁷ Dieses Netzwerk ist aktiv in Andalusien, Katalonien und Madrid. Es gehört nicht zu den von der Regierung vereinbarten Auszubildendenprogrammen, sondern will die Lehrlingsausbildung fördern.

- Ein erster Schritt zur Stärkung der Beteiligung von Auszubildenden in Europa besteht darin, die Vorteile zu kommunizieren sowie Beispiele bewährter Praktiken für die Beteiligung von Auszubildenden in bestehenden Strukturen und Organisationen auf nationaler und regionaler Ebene publik zu machen.
- Nationale und regionale Regierungen und Organisationen (Schüler-/Studentenverbände, Jugendorganisationen, Gewerkschaften, Anbieter von beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung und Unternehmen) müssen besser über die Beteiligungshindernisse aufgeklärt werden, um entsprechend handeln zu können.
- Wahrscheinlich lässt sich die Beteiligung in allen europäischen Ländern durch Sensibilisierung und Kapazitätsaufbau steigern. In einigen Ländern könnten möglicherweise auch spezifische Änderungen wie Gesetzesreformen erforderlich sein.
- Auf Organisationsebene muss es Maßnahmen geben, die gewährleisten, dass alle Auszubildenden Zugang zu Vertretungsstrukturen haben und auf gleicher Ebene wie andere Gruppen (andere Schüler/Studenten, Jugendliche, junge Arbeitnehmer oder Angestellte) teilnehmen können.
- Zusätzlich zur Beteiligung muss sichergestellt werden, dass die Interessen der Auszubildenden auch bei Entscheidungen bezüglich der Verwaltung von Lehrlingsausbildungen berücksichtigt werden. Transparente Vertretungsmechanismen unterstützen die Einführung von Vertretungsstrukturen, indem sie ihnen Sinn und Zweck verleihen.

Im Hinblick auf das EAN und dessen zukünftige Entwicklung ergab die Studie Folgendes:

- Das EAN hatte einen vielversprechenden Start und wird für seinen Beitrag zu den EU-Prioritäten im Bereich der Lehrlingsausbildungspolitik, insbesondere im Hinblick auf den EAfA, die sieben Prioritäten des EAN und die Position des Europäischen Jugendforums (EJF) zu hochwertigen Lehrlingsausbildungen, gewürdigt.
- Das EAN wird als dynamisches Netzwerk gesehen, dessen Mitglieder Botschafter für Lehrlingsausbildungen sind. Ihr freiwilliger Beitrag zum EAN und dessen Tätigkeit wird geschätzt.
- Die Interviewpartner stimmten darin überein, dass die Verwaltungsstruktur des EAN gestärkt werden sollte. Vorgeschlagen wurden ein eigenes EAN-Sekretariat sowie ein „formaler Auftrag“, obwohl nicht eindeutig ist, was dieser formale Auftrag beinhalten sollte. Einige der befragten Personen meinten, dass das EAN einen ähnlichen Status wie OBESSU und das EJF haben sollte.
- Die derzeitige Mitgliedschaft des EAN ist nicht ausreichend repräsentativ im Hinblick auf Alter und Geschlecht der Zielgruppen, Organisationsarten und geografische Abdeckung.
- Durch eine Verbesserung seiner bestehenden Kommunikationskanäle könnte das EAN noch mehr Bedeutung auf europäischer und nationaler Ebene erlangen. Hierzu wären zusätzliche finanzielle Mittel und Kapazitäten wünschenswert.
- Die Häufigkeit der EAfA-Tagungen und die den EAN-Mitgliedern zur Verfügung stehende Zeit für Treffen gilt als unzureichend. Da zwischen den EAfA-Tagungen keine weiteren Aktivitäten stattfinden, geht die Dynamik manchmal verloren. Da die EAN-Treffen parallel zu den EAfA-Tagungen stattfinden, können einige EAN-Mitglieder aufgrund beruflicher Verpflichtungen nicht persönlich an den EAN-Treffen teilnehmen.
- Die Gewährleistung, dass EAN-Mitglieder über angemessene Qualifikationen verfügen und Zugang zu relevanten Schulungen haben, könnte die Rolle des EAN als Fachzentrum unterstreichen.

- Die Interviewpartner waren eindeutig dafür, dass das EAN ein Dachverband mit Auszubildendenvertretern aus allen europäischen Ländern wird. Das EAN hat das Potenzial, Teil der allgemeinen Bemühungen zu werden, die Vertretung von Lernenden in beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung weiterzuentwickeln.
- Man ist sich einig, dass das EAN dazu beitragen sollte, die Strukturen für die Auszubildendenvertretung in der EU zu stärken, die Öffentlichkeit für dieses Thema zu sensibilisieren, bewährte Praktiken publik zu machen und das gegenseitige Lernen zu erleichtern.

Akronyme

ANAF	Association Nationale des Apprentis de France (Nationaler Auszubildendenverband Frankreichs)
ARES	Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (Akademie für Forschung und höhere Bildung in Wallonien, Belgien)
EAN	European Apprentices Network (Europäisches Netzwerk für Auszubildende)
EafA	Europäische Ausbildungsallianz
EFQEA	Europäischer Rahmen für eine hochwertige und nachhaltige Lehrlingsausbildung
ETUC	Europäischer Gewerkschaftsbund (EGB)
EYF/EJF	Europäisches Jugendforum
JAV	Jugend- und Auszubildendenvertretung in deutschen Gewerkschaften
JOB	Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs (Niederländische Vereinigung von Berufsschülern)
NSoA	National Society of Apprentices in the UK (Nationale Auszubildendenvereinigung im Vereinigten Königreich)
OSKU	Suomen Opiskelija-Allianssi (Finnische nationale Vereinigung für Berufsschüler der Sekundarstufe II)
UNISON	Britische Gewerkschaft für den öffentlichen Dienst
OAED	Organisation für die Beschäftigung des Arbeitskräftepotenzials in Griechenland
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (Europäischer Dachverband nationaler Schüler- und Schülervertretungsorganisationen)
OPSO	Verband der Anbieter von beruflicher Aus- und Weiterbildung in Finnland mit Schwerpunkt auf Lehrlingsausbildung
SAN	Spanish Apprentices Network (Spanisches Netzwerk für Auszubildende)
SAKKI	Suomen Ammattiin Opiskelevien Liitto (Nationale Vereinigung finnischer Berufsschüler)
SEMTA	The Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance (Britischer Verband für Wissenschaft, Ingenieurwesen und Herstellungstechnologie)
SÍF	Samband íslenskra framhaldsskólanema (Verband isländischer Schülervertretungen der Sekundarstufe II)
SSUN	School Student Union of Norway (Norwegische Schülerrechtsorganisation)
VSK	Vlaamse Scholieren Koepel (Dachverband flämischer Sekundarschüler in Flandern, Belgien)

Länderkürzel

AL	Albanien
AT	Österreich
BEfr	Belgien Wallonia
BEfl	Belgien Flandern

*Study on the representation of apprentices in vocational education and training (VET)
and other relevant bodies or networks of EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA
Countries*

BG	Bulgarien
CH	Schweiz
CY	Zypern
CZ	Tschechien
DE	Deutschland
DK	Dänemark
EE	Estland
EL	Griechenland
ES	Spanien
FI	Finnland
FR	Frankreich
HR	Kroatien
HU	Ungarn
IE	Irland
IS	Island
IT	Italien
LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Litauen
LU	Luxemburg
LV	Lettland
ME	Montenegro
MT	Malta
NL	Niederlande
NMK	Nordmazedonien ¹⁸
NO	Norwegen
PL	Polen
PT	Portugal
RO	Rumänien
RS	Serbien
SE	Schweden
SI	Slowenien
SK	Slowakei
TR	Türkei
UK	Vereinigtes Königreich

¹⁸ Im Februar 2019 wurde Mazedonien offiziell in Nordmazedonien umbenannt.

Note de synthèse

Pendant de nombreuses années, les décideurs politiques au niveau national ont mis en place une série de mesures visant à garantir un apprentissage de qualité afin d'aider les jeunes lors de la transition de l'école vers le marché du travail. Tout en reconnaissant la responsabilité nationale et la grande diversité des systèmes d'apprentissage en Europe, l'Union européenne a placé l'apprentissage au premier rang de ses priorités politiques. En mars 2018, le Conseil de l'UE a adopté le cadre européen pour un apprentissage efficace et de qualité¹⁹ (EFQEA). Son objectif est d'accroître l'employabilité et le développement personnel des apprentis jeunes et adultes et de contribuer au développement d'une main-d'œuvre hautement qualifiée et compétente pouvant répondre aux besoins du marché du travail. Dans ce cadre, *l'apprentissage s'entend comme des programmes d'enseignement et de formation professionnels formels qui :*

- a) associent l'apprentissage dans les établissements d'enseignement ou de formation et une formation substantielle en entreprise ou autre lieu de travail ;*
- b) conduisent à des qualifications reconnues au niveau national ;*
- c) reposent sur un accord définissant les droits et obligations de l'apprenti, de l'employeur et, le cas échéant, de l'établissement d'enseignement et de formation professionnels, et*
- d) et pour lesquels l'apprenti est rémunéré ou rétribué d'une autre manière pour la composante liée au travail.*

En outre, l'Alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage (EAfA)²⁰ cherche à associer les gouvernements, les partenaires sociaux et d'autres acteurs clés²¹ dans la poursuite d'objectifs communs de renforcement de l'offre, de la qualité et de l'image de l'apprentissage et de la mobilité des apprentis en Europe. Bien que les organisations de jeunesse européennes contribuent à l'EAfA, aucune organisation représentant spécifiquement les apprentis n'est membre de l'EAfA²².

Jusqu'à récemment, les apprentis avaient peu d'occasions de contribuer aux discussions relatives à la politique d'apprentissage au niveau européen et de faire entendre leur voix. En réponse à cela, la Commission européenne (DG EMPL) a lancé le Réseau européen des apprentis (EAN) en 2017 pour représenter – entre autres choses – la voix des apprentis. Bien que le réseau EAN soit encore relativement nouveau, il est reconnu pour sa contribution aux priorités de l'UE en matière de politique d'apprentissage, notamment en ce qui concerne l'EAfA.

Au niveau national, les données prouvant l'existence de structures de représentation des apprentis sont lacunaires. Lorsque de telles structures existent - au sein de systèmes d'apprentissage sur le lieu de travail – la représentation est principalement mise en œuvre par le biais de comités d'entreprise et / ou de syndicats. Dans les systèmes scolaires, la représentation des apprentis est soutenue par le biais de conseils d'école et / ou de divers autres organismes (organismes de conseil, associations d'enseignement et formation professionnels (EFP), partenaires sociaux). Si ceci représente un aperçu général des structures de représentation des apprentis, les données sont en revanche limitées sur la manière dont les apprentis sont engagés

19 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)

20 Lancé en juillet 2013 par la Commission Européenne en collaboration étroite avec les partenaires sociaux européens.

21 Entreprises, chambres du commerce/de l'artisanat/ de l'industrie et réseaux professionnels, fournisseurs d'enseignement et formation professionnels (EFP), des organisations sans but lucratif et jeunes/parents ainsi que les autorités nationales/régionales, les centres de recherche et cellules de réflexion.

22 Même si la représentation des apprentis fait partie du portefeuille, plus large, de l'OBESSU et de l'YFJ.

et consultés sur le développement ou sur la mise en œuvre et la gouvernance de l'apprentissage.

Cette étude repose sur les objectifs principaux suivants:

1. Etablir une cartographie de la représentation des apprentis au sein des différentes instances²³ des pays ciblés ;
2. Formuler des conclusions et des suggestions pour des actions sur la manière dont la représentation pourrait être développée et renforcée au niveau national et comment ceci pourrait être soutenu au niveau européen ;
3. Formuler également des conclusions des suggestions pour des actions sur la manière dont le Réseau européen d'apprentis (EAN) pourrait continuer à se développer tout en renforçant sa valeur ajoutée au niveau des développements nationaux et du débat politique européen.

Aperçu de la méthodologie

Cette étude a pour objectif d'offrir un panorama des structures existantes de représentation des apprentis au sein de **37 pays**, incluant l'ensemble des États membres de l'UE, les pays candidats et les pays de l'Association européenne de libre-échange (AELE)²⁴. Pour ce faire, la collecte de données s'est faite par le biais de recherche en ligne, revue de documents politiques et d'autres sources pertinentes, ainsi que grâce à 79 entretiens semi-structurés menés auprès de représentants des structures de représentation des apprentis, de décideurs, de partenaires sociaux et d'autres parties prenantes concernées au niveau national. Quatre études de cas ont en outre été effectuées afin d'offrir une analyse plus fine de quatre structures de représentation des apprentis. Ces structures ont été sélectionnées au sein des pays suivants : Danemark, Pays-Bas, Australie et Canada.

Afin d'offrir des informations plus spécifiques sur la mise en œuvre de l'EAN et des suggestions quant à son rôle futur, des entretiens ont également été menés avec 15 membres du réseau et du personnel d'appui et cinq représentants d'organisations au niveau européen. L'analyse a été complétée par les conclusions tirées d'entretiens menés au niveau national (conduits dans le cadre de la cartographie des structures de représentation des apprentis au niveau national). La collecte des données s'est déroulée entre janvier et mars 2019.

Principales conclusions

Concernant la cartographie des structures de représentation des apprentis, les principales conclusions de l'étude sont les suivantes :

- **68 structures impliquées dans la représentation des apprentis ont été identifiées** au total. Le type de structure varie considérablement d'un pays à l'autre. Celles-ci ont été réparties en trois types différents, comme indiqué dans le tableau 1 ci-dessous.

Table 5. Structures de représentation des apprentis dans les pays européens couverts par l'étude

Type	Couverture	Nombre de structures	Pays
Représentation directe	Apprentis	6	AT, DE, DK, ES, FR, UK

23 Comme indiqué dans les Termes de Référence, le terme « instances » fait référence à : « instances d'EFPP et autres instances ou réseaux pertinents pour la gouvernance des systèmes d'EFPP, en particulier les parcours d'apprentissage, qu'ils soient formels ou informels ».

24 Pays candidats (AL, ME, Macédoine du Nord, RS et TR), pays AELE (CH, IS, LI et NO).

Type	Couverture	Nombre de structures	Pays
	Elèves de l'EFP	7	DK, FI, NL, NO
Représentation indirecte : champ plus large	Représentation d'élèves inscrit dans le secondaire ou de jeunes Représentation d'employés / de professionnels	24	BEnl, BEfr, RH, IE, IT, LU, LV, PT, SI, RO, RU, CH, IS, LI, NMK, No, RS
Représentation indirecte : consultation par le biais d'organisations plus larges	Autres (incluant des organismes de consultation aux niveaux national, régional ou local; des associations d'écoles d'EFP et partenaires sociaux; autres entités)	31	BEfr, CZ, CY, EE, EL, FI, FR, IE, LT, SE, SI, SK, RO, RU, CH, NO, NMK, TU

Aucune structure de représentation (correspondant aux critères établis pour l'étude) n'a été identifiée en Bulgarie, en Hongrie, à Malte, en Pologne, en Albanie²⁵ et au Monténégro.

L'étude a plus généralement permis d'identifier des structures de représentation (pour plus de détails, cf. fiches pays) mais n'offre pas d'analyse de leur pertinence / fonctionnement au sein des systèmes nationaux. L'étude ne fait en outre aucune proposition quant à la manière dont ces structures pourraient déléguer un représentant à l'EAN (qui reste sous la compétence nationale, y compris les partenaires sociaux, le cas échéant). Ceci est valable pour toutes les structures présentées dans les trois typologies ci-dessus.

- Cette étude montre globalement que les intérêts des apprentis sont mieux défendus via les structures qui les représentent directement et/ou qui représentent l'ensemble des élèves de l'EFP. Actuellement, seul un nombre limité de pays européens dispose de telles structures, comme le montre le tableau 2.

Table 6. Structures de représentation directe des apprentis au sein des pays européens

Représentation directe (couverture)	Structures
Apprentis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autriche : représentants de la jeunesse dans les syndicats au niveau de l'entreprise, de la région ou du pays (syndicat des employés du secteur privé, des secteurs de l'impression, du journalisme et du papier et autres syndicats) • Allemagne : représentants de la jeunesse et des apprentis via des syndicats au niveau de l'entreprise, aux niveaux régional et national (Confédération allemande des syndicats)

25 L'Alliance Albanaise pour l'Apprentissage existe. Néanmoins, aucune autre information liée à la représentation des apprentis n'a pu être identifiée dans le cadre de l'étude.

Représentation directe (couverture)	Structures
	<p>(DGB), d'organisations parapluie comme Ver.di et autres syndicats plus petits).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danemark : représentants des apprentis au sein des syndicats. Plusieurs syndicats. • Espagne : Réseau d'Apprentis Espagnols («we are dual VET» en anglais)²⁶ • France : Association nationale des apprentis de France (ANAF) • Royaume-Uni : Société Nationale des Apprentis (NSoA)
Elèves dans l'ÉFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danemark : Union danoise des élèves des écoles professionnelles et techniques ; Comités scolaires locaux • Finlande : syndicat national finlandais des élèves des établissements d'enseignement secondaire supérieur professionnel (OSKU) ; Union nationale des étudiants de formation professionnelle en Finlande (SAKKI) • Pays-Bas : L'Union nationale des élèves des Pays-Bas met l'accent sur l'ÉFP (JOB) • Norvège : Conseil national de la formation professionnelle (représentant des apprentis) ; Conseils pour les programmes professionnels du deuxième cycle du secondaire (représentants des apprentis)

-
- Au sein de structures plus larges (c.-à-d. représentant un groupe plus large d'élèves, de jeunes ou de professionnels), les données collectées sur le niveau de participation des apprentis se sont avérées limitées et semblent généralement indiquer qu'ils ne sont pas nécessairement bien représentés. De plus, les sujets inscrits sur les agendas politiques semblent dominés par des thématiques non liées à l'apprentissage.
- Dans les structures qui représentent indirectement les apprentis (via des consultations menées par des organismes plus larges) la consultation n'est pas systématisée tandis que les points de vue des apprentis ne sont parfois recueillis qu'indirectement (par le biais de témoignages d'employeurs ou du personnel des établissements d'ÉFP).
- Les données collectées mettent en évidence qu'une première étape vers le renforcement de la participation des apprentis en Europe consiste à promouvoir les bénéficiaires et à partager les bonnes pratiques en termes de niveau de participation des apprentis au sein des structures existantes aux niveaux national, régional et organisationnel.
- Les gouvernements et organisations nationales et régionales (associations et syndicats d'étudiants, organisations de jeunesse, syndicats, prestataires d'ÉFP

26 Ce réseau s'étend sur les régions d'Andalousie, de Catalogne et de Madrid. Il ne fait pas partie des conventions de gouvernance nationale des programmes d'apprentissage mais fonctionne plutôt comme levier de promotion de l'apprentissage.

et entreprises) doivent avoir une meilleure compréhension des obstacles à la participation afin de pouvoir agir en conséquence.

- Les activités de sensibilisation et de renforcement des capacités ont le potentiel de contribuer à l'accroissement de la participation (des apprentis) au sein des pays européens. Dans certains pays, des modifications plus spécifiques telles que des réformes juridiques pourraient également être nécessaires.
- Au niveau organisationnel, des mesures doivent être prises pour que tous les apprentis aient accès à des structures de représentation et participent au même niveau que les autres groupes (autres étudiants, jeunes, jeunes travailleurs ou employés).
- Au-delà de la participation, il est important de garantir la représentation des apprentis dans les processus de prise de décision liés à la gouvernance de l'apprentissage. Avoir des mécanismes de représentation clairs motive le développement de structures de représentation en leur donnant une raison d'être.

Concernant l'EAN et son développement futur, les principales conclusions de l'étude sont :

- Les premiers accomplissements de l'EAN sont prometteurs. Le réseau est reconnu pour sa contribution aux priorités de l'UE en matière de politiques d'apprentissage, en particulier celles définies dans le cadre de l'EAFa, les sept priorités de l'EAN et la position du Forum européen de la Jeunesse (FEJ) sur un Apprentissage de Qualité.
- L'EAN est perçu comme un réseau dynamique servant d'ambassadeur pour l'apprentissage. La contribution volontaire de ses derniers à l'EAN et à ses activités est appréciée.
- Les personnes interrogées s'entendent sur le besoin de renforcer la structure de gouvernance de l'EAN. Les suggestions avancées incluent le fait d'avoir un secrétariat dédié et un « mandat formel » (bien qu'il n'y ait pas de vision claire sur ce qu'est exactement un « mandat formel »). Dans une certaine mesure, les données collectées mettent en évidence le souhait de faire évoluer le statut de l'EAN vers un statut similaire à celui de l'OBESSU et du FEJ.
- La composition actuelle des membres de l'EAN n'est pas pleinement représentative des différentes catégories d'âge et de sexe, des différents types d'organisation et en termes de couverture géographique.
- Le rôle de l'EAN aux niveaux européen et national pourrait être davantage promu en améliorant les canaux de communication existants du réseau. L'apport de ressources financières et de capacités supplémentaires sont également suggérées.
- La fréquence des réunions organisées dans le cadre de l'EAFa et le temps dont disposent les membres EAN pour se rencontrer sont considérés comme limités. L'absence d'activités supplémentaires entre les réunions de l'EAFa sont considérées comme entraînant parfois une perte de l'élan. Considérant que les réunions de l'EAN se tiennent parallèlement à celles de l'EAFa, les membres de l'EAN ne peuvent tous assister aux réunions de l'EAN en personne, en raison d'autres engagements professionnels.
- S'assurer que les membres de l'EAN possèdent suffisamment d'expérience et ont l'occasion de suivre une formation pertinente pourrait contribuer à renforcer le rôle de l'EAN en tant que centre d'expertise.
- Les données collectées suggèrent un fort soutien en faveur d'un rôle d'organisation parapluie pour l'EAN qui rassemblerait des représentants des apprentis de tous les pays européens à l'avenir. Les données suggèrent également que l'EAN a le potentiel de contribuer à une approche plus large visant à développer davantage la représentation des apprenants de l'EFPP.

- Un consensus quant au fait que l'ÉAN contribue au développement de structures de représentation des apprentis dans l'UE en sensibilisant le public, en partageant des meilleures pratiques et en facilitant les activités d'apprentissage entre pairs émerge également de l'analyse.

Acronymes

ANAF	Association Nationale des Apprentis de France
ARES	Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur en Belgique-Wallonie
EAN	Réseau européen des apprentis
EafA	Alliance européenne pour l'apprentissage
EFQEA	Cadre européen pour un apprentissage efficace et de qualité
ETUC	Confédération européenne des syndicats
FEJ	Forum européen de la jeunesse
JAV	Représentants des jeunes et des apprentis dans les syndicats allemands
JOB	Syndicat national des élèves des Pays-Bas
NSoA	Société nationale des apprentis au Royaume-Uni
OSKU	Syndicat national des élèves des lycées professionnels en Finlande
UNISON	Syndicat de la fonction publique au Royaume-Uni
OAED	Organisation de l'emploi de la main d'œuvre en Grèce
OBESSU	Bureau d'organisation des syndicats d'élèves européens
OPSO	Association de prestataires de l'ÉFP axée sur l'apprentissage en Finlande
SAN	Réseau des apprentis espagnols
SAKKI	Syndicat national des élèves de l'ÉFP en Finlande
SEMTA	Alliance des sciences, de l'ingénierie et des technologies de fabrication au Royaume-Uni
SIF	Syndicat islandais des élèves du secondaire supérieur
SSUN	Syndicat d'élèves de Norvège
VSK	Association flamande de coordination étudiante en Belgique-Flandre

Codes pays

AL	Albanie
AT	Autriche
BEfr	Belgique (Communauté française)
BEfl	Belgique (Communauté flamande)

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Countries*

BG	Bulgarie
CH	Suisse
CY	Chypre
CZ	République tchèque
DE	Allemagne
DK	Danemark
EE	Estonie
EL	Grèce
ES	Espagne
FI	Finlande
FR	France
HR	Croatie
HU	Hongrie
IE	Irlande
IS	Islande
IT	Italie
LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Lituanie
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Lettonie
ME	Monténégro
MT	Malte
NL	Pays Bas
NMK	Macédoine du Nord ²⁷
NO	Norvège
PL	Pologne
PT	Portugal

27 Depuis février 2019, le nom officiel de la Macédoine est « Macédoine du Nord ».

*Study on the representation of apprentices in vocational education and training (VET)
and other relevant bodies or networks of EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA
Countries*

RO	Roumanie
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RS	Serbie
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SE	Suède
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SI	Slovénie
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1 Introduction

This revised Draft Final Report presents the findings of the Study on the Representation of apprentices in vocational education and training (VET) and other relevant bodies or networks of EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA Countries carried out between November 2018 and March 2019.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 introduces the study and presents the policy context, rationale and main objectives of the study. It also provides a brief overview of the method of approach and outlines the scope of the study in terms of geographical scope, key definitions and terminology used.
- Section 2 describes apprentice representation structures across Europe. It proposes a typology to classify these structures, differentiating between direct and indirect representation. It describes the characteristics of representation bodies and the types of methods used. It also discusses the enabling factors and the challenges to apprentice representation.
- Section 3 analyses four inspiring practices from apprentice representation structures based on the in-depth case studies produced as part of this study. It describes the three different representation models, reflects on how each structure feeds into the governance of apprenticeships, and extracts key messages and lessons learnt.
- Section 4 analyses the current role of the European Apprentices Network (EAN) and makes suggestions for its future development. It addresses EAN contribution to EU and national priorities related to apprenticeship policy, the accomplishments and added value of EAN, its governance and activities. It reflects on the future of EAN as an umbrella organisation, and its role in producing guidelines.
- Section 5 presents the conclusions of the study and makes suggestions for action on how to strengthen apprentice representation across Europe and how to strengthen the future role of the EAN.

This report is supplemented by the following Annexes:

- Annex 1: Mapping table of apprentice representation structures
- Annex 2: List of key informant interviews at national level
- Annex 3: Country factsheets
- Annex 4: Case studies

1.1 Policy context and rationale for the study

Over the past decade there has been increased emphasis on the need for high quality apprenticeships to facilitate successful school-to-work transitions for young people and increase their employment prospects²⁸. The high attention paid to promoting apprenticeships and making them attractive to learners and employers is reinforced in a range of policies and targeted initiatives related to education, training and youth at European level. For example:

- The **Youth Guarantee** (April 2013) called on Member States to ensure all young people under the age of 25 'receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'²⁹.

²⁸ European Commission (2013). *Work-based learning in Europe. Practices and policy pointers*. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the EU

²⁹ Council of the European Union (2013). *Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee*. [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01)&from=EN)

- In 2013, the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA)** was launched with the overarching goal to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships in Europe, as well as the apprentices' mobility opportunities.
- The **2015 Riga Conclusions** emphasised the contribution of apprenticeships to tackling youth unemployment³⁰ and made work-based learning in all its forms, including apprenticeships - one of the five priorities for 2015-2020.
- The **New Skills Agenda for Europe**, (June 2016), set out ten key actions to improve the quality and relevance of training and make skills more visible and comparable. It paid specific attention to the value of vocational education and Training (VET) and apprenticeships.
- Through the 2017 **Rome Declaration**, ensuring all young people receive the best education and training and find jobs across the continent³¹ was emphasised.
- The **European Pillar of Social Rights** was launched in 2017. One of its twenty main principles 'education, training and life-long learning', states that 'everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market'. Another of its main principles concerns 'active support to employment' - reinforcing the 'need for young people have the right to continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job offer of good standing within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education'.³² Moreover, the principle related to social dialogue and involvement of workers, states that workers or their representatives have the right to be informed and consulted in good time on matters relevant to them.

With a specific focus on quality apprenticeships, a range of other policy developments can be observed. In 2017, the **European Youth Forum**³³ (YFJ) launched the European Quality Charter on Internship and Apprenticeships, emphasising the need for legal quality frameworks for internships and apprenticeships in terms of education, rights and remuneration³⁴.

Ensuring apprentice rights are upheld is a key condition of quality apprenticeships and can be supported and facilitated through establishing representative structures for apprentices at all levels. To this end, the **European Apprentices Network (EAN)** was established in 2017 to ensure the voice of young apprentices is heard in discussions related to VET, in particular for apprenticeships. The EAN has identified key priorities and encourages all stakeholders, to shape quality apprenticeship programmes based on these priorities.

With a continued focus on quality apprenticeships, the **European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA)**³⁵ (March 2018), sets out a coherent set of

³⁰ Riga Conclusions (2015). www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf

³¹ Council of the European Union (2017). *The Rome Declaration*. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/pdf>

³² European Commission (2017). *European Pillar of Social Rights*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

³³ European Youth Forum, <http://www.youthforum.org>

³⁴ European Youth Forum (2017). *European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships* <http://www.youthforum.org/european-quality-charter-internships-and-apprenticeships>

³⁵ Council of the European Union (2018). *Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships*. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6779-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

criteria for quality and effective apprenticeships and calls for renewed efforts to support young people prepare for employment through quality apprenticeships. Also in 2018, the European Youth Forum, launched its 'Position on Quality Apprenticeships', emphasises representative structures for apprentices at all levels as a key enabling condition of quality apprenticeships.

In addition, EU level cooperation in the field of VET includes a range of activities aimed at promoting social dialogue and fostering mutual learning related to improving the quality of apprenticeships and VET more broadly:

- A Communication from the European Commission, '**Investing in Europe's Youth**' (December 2016) reinforced the role of well-developed vocational and apprenticeship systems as one of the most effective ways to keep youth unemployment in check or prevent it.
- The **Working Group on vocational education and training (VET WG)**, in the remit of Education and Training ET2020 is committed among other aspects, to promoting work-based learning in all its forms, with special attention to apprenticeships.
- The **European Vocational Skills Week**, first launched in 2016 by the European Commission aims to "improve the attractiveness and image of vocational education and training, [...] to showcase excellence and quality and raise awareness of the wide range of opportunities"³⁶.
- The EC and CRS Europe³⁷ initiated the **Pact for Youth**, a mutual engagement of business and EU leaders "to develop or consolidate partnerships in support of youth employability and inclusion"³⁸. Through business education partnerships, the partners of the pact have provided new traineeships, apprenticeships and entry-level positions.
- To further strengthen quality assurance in VET, the **EQAVET + Framework**³⁹ includes improvements to existing EQAVET indicative descriptors and introduces some new descriptors. It now contains an indicative descriptor on 'learner centred approach', whereby 'VET providers respond to the learning needs of individuals by using approaches to pedagogy and assessment which enable learners to achieve the expected learning outcomes'.
- The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training published its '**Opinion on the future of vocational education and training Post 2020**' in December 2018. Reinforcing the importance of quality apprenticeships, it recognises the need to strengthen the involvement of key stakeholders, including VET learners in the development, implementation and governance of VET policies.

The policy focus on apprenticeships outlined above reinforces the involvement of key stakeholders in apprenticeship governance as another key condition of quality apprenticeships. Ensuring their commitment does not come without its challenges. This is largely owing to the broad and diverse landscape of apprenticeship schemes across Europe. Some countries have no apprenticeship schemes (e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic), some have one main apprenticeship scheme (e.g. Cyprus, Germany), whilst others have more than one (e.g. Portugal, Romania) and they vary considerably in terms of their origins and characteristics. Moreover, there are many different types of organisations involved in the governance of apprenticeship – this includes government

³⁶ European Commission (2016). *European Vocational Skills Week*. https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/about-skills-week_en

³⁷ European Business network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): <https://www.csreurope.org/about-us>

³⁸ CSR Europe (2015). *European Pact for Europe*. <https://www.csreurope.org/pactforyouth>

³⁹ <https://www.eqavet.eu/EU-Quality-Assurance/For-VET-System/Eqavetplus/EQAVET-Approach>

ministers and officials, school councils, work councils, trade unions, public employment organisations, youth organisations/councils, VET institutions, apprentice alumni networks, and/or sector skills councils. The diversity of apprenticeship schemes also means that apprenticeships are aimed at different target groups (e.g. young people, young adults, unemployed). This means the age range of apprentices can be between 15 and 18; 18 and 24 and those over 24. Depending on the governance arrangements of an apprenticeship, an individual can take on the status of an apprentice, student, employee or dual status of apprentice/employee – meaning apprentices learn in a variety of different learning environments and workplaces and subject to different working conditions and contractual arrangements.

The significance of such heterogeneity in the context of this study is that little is known about how countries consult or engage apprentices in the development, implementation of the governance of apprenticeships at national level. Despite an increased policy focus on the active involvement of apprentices in apprenticeship governance, representative structures for apprentices are not common across Europe⁴⁰. Where they exist, there is limited evidence of the methods used to consult apprentices and extent to which the diversity of the apprentice population is reached. At the European level, initiation of the EAN in 2017 was established to ‘provide a space for apprentices [...] to have their voice heard and make their contribution to improved apprenticeship systems in Europe’⁴¹. Specifically, the EAN identifies ‘representation’ as one of its key priorities and ‘strongly advocates for individuals undertaking an apprenticeship to have structures for representation available to them at all levels of government (European, national, regional and local)’⁴². In this respect, the EAN is ideally positioned to contribute to the development of apprentice representation structures across Europe.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To undertake a mapping of the representation of apprentices in the different bodies⁴³ in the targeted countries;
- To draw conclusions and make suggestions for action on how representation could be further developed and strengthened at national level and in which way, the European level could support it;
- To draw conclusions and make suggestions for action on how the European Apprentices Network (EAN) could further grow to enhance its added value in the relationship between national developments and the European policy debate.

This study covers 37 countries in total, including EU Member States, as well as Candidate⁴⁴ and EFTA countries⁴⁵. Our approach was primarily at country-level, however we also explored the extent to which regional structures of apprentice representation exist as part of the mapping of representation structures within a country context. Where a regional dimension of representation structures has been identified, this is discussed throughout.

⁴⁰ EAN (2018) Key priorities for Apprenticeships (priority 4)

⁴¹ European Apprentices Network (2017). *Key priorities for Quality Apprenticeships*. <https://apprenticesnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/key-priorities-for-quality-apprenticeships.pdf>

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ As indicated in the Terms of References, the term ‘bodies’ refers to: “VET bodies and other bodies or networks relevant to the governance of VET systems, in particular apprenticeship schemes, whether formal or informal”.

⁴⁴ Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

⁴⁵ Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

In terms of the broader scope of the study, the narrative below provides clarification on scope, key terms and definitions used to underpin this study.

One of the key objectives of the study is to identify different 'bodies' involved in the representation of apprentices. The terms of reference referred to '*VET bodies and other bodies or networks relevant to the governance of VET systems, in particular apprenticeship schemes, whether formal or informal*'. Our research shows a variety of bodies exist at national, regional and local levels across Europe. This ranges from apprentice, student or youth organisations, to trade unions, student unions, VET providers, and a diversity of other entities, including VET/apprenticeship alumni's.

In this study we primarily use the term 'learners' when referring to apprentices – though it is recognised that in some countries preferable terms may include 'students', 'trainees', and/or 'apprentices'.

In line with the terms of reference, this study also sought to provide clarification on a distinction between direct and indirect structures of representation and formal / informal 'bodies'. Based on the research findings a distinction between direct and indirect structures can be identified and provides the basis to develop a typology of representation structures. This typology is presented in section 2 below. A demarcation between 'formal and informal bodies' responsible for apprentice representation was however not identified. This is due to the diversity of the bodies involved in aspects of apprentice representation which themselves are based on different political, economic and social structures.

For the purpose of this study, and in line with the proposal for the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that:

- Combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces;
- Lead to nationally recognised qualifications;
- Are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the VET institution;
- Have the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the work-based component of their training.

Lastly, in line with one of the main objectives of this study, the focus of our research is on the European Apprentice Network. Other apprentice network and initiatives exist at European level, such as EuroApprentices⁴⁶ and the Apprenticeship Support Services of the European Commission⁴⁷. EuroApprentices is a network of organisations (including competent bodies and VET centres) providing expertise and information to support in-company learning mobility; the Apprenticeship Support Services aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships and provide tailored support to stakeholders involved in delivering apprenticeships. Opportunities to create bridges between the EAN and existing networks/services, including to a certain extent the 'Erasmus Student Network' is discussed under section 4.8 below.

1.3 Method of approach and tasks undertaken

The study has been informed by four mutually reinforcing methods drawing on: desk research, key informant interviews and case studies. Our method of approach is summarised in Table 7 set out below.

⁴⁶ <http://www.euroapprenticeship.eu/en/home.html>

⁴⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&intPageId=5235&langId=en>

Table 7. Summary of the methodology

Method	Source / type of respondent	Coverage	Number of interviews/ case studies	Reporting/ output
Desk research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites, policy documents and reports from: the relevant national ministry/ies; trade unions and work councils; employer organisations, chambers of commerce and sector bodies; VET provider representative bodies. • Other dedicated websites for the general public providing information and guidance on apprenticeships/ apprentice representation. • Expert / academic reports on apprenticeships and apprentice representation. 	37 countries: EU Member States, Candidate and EFTA countries.	N/a	<p>Mapping table listing 73 entities enquired about their role in apprentice representation (Annex 1).⁴⁸</p> <p>37 country factsheets⁴⁹ (Annex 3).</p> <p>Comparative analysis (see section 2)</p>
Key informant interviews (KIIs) at national level	<p>Representatives of relevant national ministries and VET agencies, youth and student organisations, social partners, VET provider representative bodies, and other relevant stakeholders at the national level.</p> <p>The full list of entities consulted is available in Annex 2.</p>	25 EU Member States (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK and UK), ⁵⁰ and all candidate and EFTA countries.	79 interviews. Between 1 and 5 interviews per country (see Annex 2).	<p>Mapping table of apprentice representation structures (Annex 1).</p> <p>37 Country factsheets (Annex 3).</p> <p>Comparative analysis (see section 2)</p>

⁴⁸ From these, 68 were identified as apprentice representation structures and are further discussed in this report.

⁴⁹ A total of 37 country factsheets are included in Annex 3 of this report.

⁵⁰ The research team did not receive replies to requests for interviews with entities in Italy and Spain.

Method	Source / type of respondent	Coverage	Number of interviews/ case studies	Reporting/ output
Key informant interviews (KIIs) at European level (focusing on the role of the EAN)	EAN members and support staff, key EU level stakeholders, and individual apprentices. The full list of entities consulted is available in Annex 2.	EU level.	20 interviews	Comparative analysis (see section 4)
Case studies	Desk review of institutional websites and strategic documents. Semi-structured interviews of representatives of the structures analysed.	Four representation structures from Denmark, Netherlands, Australia, and Canada.	4 case studies	Case study reports (Annex 4). Comparative analysis (see section 3)

Regarding the case studies, these were selected on preliminary criteria of good practice to ensure they represent:

- Both European and International apprentice representation structures;
- Different 'types' of apprentice representation (e.g. structures ensuring direct representation of apprentices, structures directly representing VET students overall; structures indirectly representing apprentices through wider scope – such as through the representation of students or youth; and structures representing apprentices by means of consultation through wider bodies/methods);
- Different organisational types (e.g. government body, trade union, VET organisation);
- Different types of apprentices (e.g. apprentices primarily in the work place or those following school led apprenticeship schemes).

The case studies were produced according to a case study template, adapted to the specificities of the individual case study (attached at Annex 4).

2 Apprentice representation structures across Europe: current state of play

This section provides an overview of the apprentice representation structures in the 37 European countries under the scope of the study and their main characteristics. The section builds on the review and analysis of information collected through desk research and key informant interviews at national level.

Section 2.1 proposes a typology of representation structures whilst listing the structures identified across Europe. The following sections outline the characteristics of

these organisations, the methods/process used for apprentice representation, the key strengths of existing structures, and the barriers to further and better apprentice representation.

2.1 Types of representation structures

This study focused on the identification of apprentice representation structures at the national level. Where relevant, the regional and local dimension within a country context were also explored as part of the mapping exercise. In total, 68 structures involved in apprentice representation were identified⁵¹. The type of representation structures varies significantly across countries. This study has identified the following types of structures as illustrated in Table 8 and discussed in more detail in section 2.1 below:

Table 8. Typology of apprentice representation structures

Type of representation structure	
Direct representation	Representation of apprentices Representation of VET students
Indirect representation: wider-scope	Representation of (secondary) students or youth ⁵² Representation of employees/professionals
Indirect representation: Consultation through wider bodies ⁵³	Consulting bodies at national, regional or local level Associations of VET schools and social partners Other entities

Table 9 below lists the organisations identified under each of the above categories at national, regional or local level. **No relevant structures have been identified in Bulgaria, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Albania⁵⁴ and Montenegro.**

⁵¹ Note: The number of structures listed in the country factsheets is slightly higher as these often include organisational-level structures in addition to national, regional and local ones (see below in report).

⁵² Note: This column only includes structures from countries where apprentice/VET-specific structures were not identified. Countries with apprentice/VET representation structures may have other bodies involved in student or youth representation.

⁵³ Note: the structures that consult apprentices were not comprehensively mapped across countries. These were mostly identified in countries where there were no structures representing apprentices directly or other relevant wider-scope structures.

⁵⁴ See footnote 7.

Table 9. Apprentice representation structures at national, regional and local level

Direct representation		Indirect representation: wider-scope structures		Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies ⁵⁵		
Representation of apprentices	Representation of VET students	Representation of (secondary) students or youth ⁵⁶	Representation of employees/professionals	Consulting bodies at national, regional or local level	Associations of VET schools and social partners	Other entities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT: youth representatives in company, regional and national levels (Union of Private Sector Employees, Printing, Journalism, and Paper, and other trade unions) • DE: youth and apprentice representatives (JAV) in trade unions at company, regional and national levels (German Trade Union) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DK: Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union • DK: School local education committees • FI: Finnish national union for students in vocational upper secondary schools (OSKU) • FI: National Union of Vocational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEnl: Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK) • BEfr: Federation of Francophone Students • BEfr: Youth Council • EE: Estonian School Student Council's Union • HR: Students' Council of the Republic of Croatia • IE: Union of Students in Ireland • IS: Icelandic Upper Secondary School Student Union (SIF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LV: Latvian Chamber of Crafts • UK: Unite the Union and UNISON 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BEfr: Council of Education and Training Board • CY: Apprenticeship Board • IE: National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee • IE: Further Education and Skills Service (SOLAS) • IE: Apprenticeship Council • NO: Apprentice Councils or Student and Apprentice councils at county level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CZ: Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic • CZ: Association of 'apprentices' institutions. • FI: VET providers' association with a focus on apprenticeships (OPSO) • FI: SAK, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions • FR: Consultation and Coordination Committee of the Apprenticeship in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEfr: Academy of Research and Higher Education (ARES) • EE: Foundation Innove • EL: Labour Force Employment Organization (OAED) • RO: Social Doers Resources Centre for Adults and Youth • RO: National Employment Agency • UK: The Science, Engineering and

⁵⁵ Note: the structures that consult apprentices were not comprehensively mapped across countries. These were mostly identified in countries where there were no structures representing apprentices or VET students directly or other relevant wider-scope structures.

⁵⁶ Note: This column only includes structures from countries where apprentice/VET-specific structures were not identified. Countries with apprentice/VET representation structures may have other bodies involved in student or youth representation.

Direct representation		Indirect representation: wider-scope structures	Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies ⁵⁵		
<p>Confederation (DGB), United Services Trade Union (Ver.di), and other smaller unions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DK: apprentice representatives in trade unions. Several unions • ES: Spanish Apprentices Network "We are dual VET"⁵⁷ • FR: National association of apprentices of France (ANAF) • UK: National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) 	<p>Students in Finland (SAKKI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NL: National School Student Union of the Netherlands focusing on VET (JOB) • NO: National Council for VET (apprentice representative), • NO: Councils for the vocational programmes at upper secondary level (apprentice representatives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT: Student Union • LI: Youth Council • LU: National Student Union • LU: National Student Conference • LV: Student Union of Latvia • North Macedonia: National Youth Council • NO: School Student Union of Norway (SSUN) • PT: National Federation of Associations of Basic and Secondary Students • RO: National Student Council • RO: Romanian Youth Council • RS: Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia • SI: School Student Organisation of Slovenia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Macedonia: VET Centre • RO: National Agency for Community Programmes in Vocational Education and Training • SE: local programme councils • TU: Vocational Education Council • TU: provincial Vocational Education Councils • UK (England): Institute for Apprenticeships • UK (England): National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (health sector) • UK (SC): Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board 	<p>Building and Public Works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LT: trade unions under the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation • SI: Trade Union "Youth Plus" (Mladiplus) • SK: Employer Council for dual VET • SK: Platform for Dual VET of the Automotive Industry Association • CH: Swiss Federation of Trade Unions • TU: Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen 	<p>Manufacturing Technologies Alliance</p>

⁵⁷ The scope of this network is the regions of Andalusia, Catalonia and Madrid. It is not within the national governance arrangements for apprenticeship schemes but rather operates to promote apprenticeships

Direct representation	Indirect representation: wider-scope structures	Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies⁵⁵
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SI: Slovenian Youth Council• CH: Federation of Swiss Youth Organisations• CH: Federation of Swiss Youth Parliaments	

Source: ICF based on country mapping and KIIs.

Based on the information collected, apprentices' interests are **better safeguarded** through structures that **represent apprentices directly or VET students overall**. In wider-scope structures (i.e. representing a wider group of students, young people or professionals), there is often little information on apprentices' level of participation, and there is some evidence that they are not necessarily well-represented (see section 2.5).

The existence and use of **mechanisms for the representation** structures to input into the governance of apprenticeships also seems to be **more frequent in the case of structures that represent apprentices directly or VET students overall**. In the case of wider scope structures, it is more likely that other topics such as youth participation or active citizenship dominate the agenda (e.g. Federation of Swiss Youth Organisations, Youth Council in the French Community of Belgium). There are however exceptions. The information collected from interviewees from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and the UK points to a relatively high involvement of apprentice representation structures in the governance of apprenticeships in these countries (see box below).

Examples of how apprentice representation structures input into the governance of apprenticeships

Direct representation of apprentices

- In **Austria**, apprenticeship representatives are involved in the design of apprenticeship schemes as they are involved in the Council for Vocational Education and Training. It is not regulated in detail, but traditionally the trade union representatives at these councils are apprenticeship representatives.
- In **France**, the consultation process on the apprenticeship reform initiated by the government in 2017 included working groups and plenary sessions involving the participation of all apprenticeship stakeholders: the Regions, the social partners, the consular chambers, the administrations concerned and other relevant associations, including the National Association of Apprentices of France (ANAF). The implementation of the reform has started in 2019 and is underway. ANAF will continue to be involved at national and regional level by participating in public debate as well as in one-to-one meetings (e.g. with deputies).
- In **Germany**, unions are involved in negotiations around updating qualifications, and 'youth and apprentice representatives' (JAV) have a voice in that process. Trade unions can be considered the political representation of apprentices' rights.

Direct representation of VET students

- In **Denmark**, apprentice representation is rooted in existing structures and tradition of trade unions. Apprenticeships are a strong feature of Denmark's dual VET system whereby the Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union directly promotes VET in Denmark. It has recently launched a project called "The road to VET" (*Vejen til en Erhvervsuddannelse*), which aims to raise the profile and attractiveness of VET.
- In **Finland**, the government involves a wide range of stakeholders, including apprentice representatives, in its policy reforms (e.g. the recent VET reform). VET student unions OSKU and SAKKI are represented in the relevant national working groups and committees of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish Agency for Education, and the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre.
- In the **Netherlands**, representation of VET students (including apprentices) by the Jongerenorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs (JOB). JOB is involved in the *student chamber* hosted by the Cooperative organisation of Vocational Education and Business (SBB) to collect students' opinions related to policy matters. The *student chamber* consists of a JOB representative and representatives of the youth organisations of the two major

Dutch employee representative organisations FNV Jong (Dutch Federation of Trade Unions Youths) and CNV Jong (Christian Dutch Trade union Youths).

Indirect representation: wider-scope structures

- In **Norway**, the framework for representation is rooted in the 1988 Education Act. The SSUN is represented in consultative VET bodies which allows the organisation to provide feedback on an ongoing revision of VET curricula in upper secondary schools. Likewise, the SSUN is represented in a government committee that presently looks into the overall structure of upper secondary education, including VET and apprenticeships.

Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies

- In the **UK** there are several bodies involved in apprentice representation. The Institute for Apprenticeships (England), a public body sponsored by the Department for Education, hosts a panel of apprentices which reports directly to the Board. Consultation is an ongoing process covering apprenticeship design and quality, among other topics.

Source: KIIs.

In countries where only **indirect representation** by means of consultation through wider bodies is possible, **apprentice participation is often not systematic**. Existing structures may provide a space to discuss apprentices' needs, views and opinions, but apprentice consultation is done on an ad hoc or irregular basis.

The following box provides some examples of how such consultation takes place across structures **indirectly representing apprentices**.

Examples of consultation of apprentices on an ad hoc or irregular basis

Indirect representation: wider-scope structures

- In **Romania**, the government organised a large consultation about the amendment of the Apprenticeship Act in 2017. Besides the social partners, it involved the Economic and Social Council which includes representatives from the National Youth Council and the National Student Association. However, this is not a common practice and youth representation in the Economic and Social Council has since significantly diminished.

Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies

- In **Cyprus**, the Apprenticeship Board is a consulting body that brings together the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, trade unions, and representatives of technical schools and inspectors. Apprentices do not participate in the council. The representatives of technical schools are expected to communicate apprentices' needs to the Ministry of Education.
- In the **Czech Republic**, the Association of 'apprentices' institutions, composed of directors from vocational secondary schools, aims to represent the interest of apprentices. However, the involvement or consultation of apprentices is not systematic.
- In **Greece**, apprentices are free to contact the Labour Force Employment Organization (OAED) if they wish so, but there are no systematic mechanisms to collect their feedback.

- In **Slovakia**, the Employer Council for dual VET has collected feedback from apprentices as part of a specific project that compared dual and school VET. The Council has recently created a platform for communication with the directors of vocational schools and is planning to create a platform for apprentices to provide their views on new methodologies. Also in Slovakia, the Platform for Dual VET of the Automotive Industry Association brings together employers who offer dual VET. Companies are expected to consult apprentices and their parents and share their views at Platform meetings.
- In **Sweden** the local programme councils are organised by the municipalities, and the VET schools convenes the council meetings. The councils include representatives from VET schools, employers, employer organisations and trade unions. Sometimes, the councils also invite students to present their views at the council meetings. There is no requirement for the students to be involved in the meetings.
- In **Turkey**, provincial Vocational Education Councils bring together public organisations, trade unions and VET school principals. Although apprentices are not members of provincial councils, school principals can transfer their opinions and recommendations. The Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen (TESK) organises meetings with representatives of the Unions of Chambers in each province and the ministry. Apprentices cannot participate in these meetings, but employers can communicate their views.

Source: KIIs.

It is worth noting that consulting **bodies** such as education councils, which exist in many countries (please note that these were not comprehensively mapped under this study), are often required to include students in their composition but in some cases, it is **not specified that they should include apprentices or VET students** and it is not clear to what extent they do (e.g. BEnl, PT). For instance, the Flemish Education Council is required to include two students from secondary education who could be, but are not necessarily, VET students or apprentices.

Although this study was aimed at identifying national, regional or local bodies that facilitate apprentices' involvement in the governance arrangements of apprenticeships, some evidence was also collected on organisational-level representation, including at VET schools and companies hosting apprentices. Apprentice representation structures seem to be widespread across European VET providers although with a few exceptions. For instance, in Montenegro there are high school students' parliaments, but these do not represent apprentices.⁵⁸

The types of organisational-level representation structures identified are briefly described in the box below.

Organisational-level apprentice representation structures

The right to representation is often granted by Law and takes the form of school councils or associations (BE (BEnl) HR, LU, LT, LV, NL, PT, CH, NO), student unions (EE, FI, HU, IS), student parliaments (RS), or company youth representatives (AT, DE). In France, apprentice representatives are members of the professional development council of Apprenticeship Training Centres (*Centre de Formation d'Apprentis (CFAs)*).

The type of activities developed by such structures varies across countries. As an example, in Austria youth representatives at company level have the right to organise

⁵⁸ Information from KII. Note that this aspect was not referred to by interviewees from all the countries and, as such, the mapping is not complete.

assemblies, sit on the workers' council (with no vote), are consulted by the company on apprentice-related matters, and contribute to conflict resolution between apprentices and other staff members. In Finland, VET providers are required to collect apprentice feedback, and this feedback has an impact on performance-based funding of the VET providers. In several countries organisational-level structures organise social, cultural or team building activities (AT, LV, PT).

Source: KIIs.

Through organisational-level structures apprentices do not directly have a say on the governance of apprenticeships which are regulated at regional or national levels. However, these structures can be the basis on which regional or national structures are built. Austria provides a concrete example of this: company-level representatives elect regional representatives who, in turn, elect national representatives.

It is also worth mentioning the Lehrlingsparlament⁵⁹ in Austria which seems to be a unique structure, allows apprentices to learn about parliamentary processes. In May 2019, an apprentice parliament was held in the Austrian parliament in Vienna. Apprentices from all over Austria were invited to take part in a two-day event and were given the opportunity to learn more about opportunities to gain experience in other European countries through Erasmus+. Erasmus experts from the Austrian Exchange Service were in attendance to support the meeting. As the meeting was held around the time of the European elections in May 2019, apprentices were also given the opportunity to learn more about political and democratic processes.

2.2 The organisations representing apprentices and their key characteristics

As mentioned earlier, the organisations representing apprentices can be apprentice or student organisations, trade unions, student unions and youth organisations. Other entities that enable apprentice participation include chambers, consulting bodies at national, regional or local level, associations of apprenticeship providers (including VET schools and employers) and employment services (see Table 9). The different nature of these entities is rooted in differences in terms of their priorities, type of activities developed and overall functioning.

This section describes the governance and funding of representation structures (geographical and sectoral scope, membership requirements and funding), their policy priorities, and their links to relevant European structures (EAN, EAfA and other).

2.2.1 Governance and funding

2.2.1.1 Geographical scope

60 out of the 68 organisations identified are set at the national level. The few exceptions include:

- the organisations identified in Belgium, as competences on apprenticeships in this country are devolved to regions:
 - The Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK)
 - The Francophone Federation of Students and Youth Council
 - The Council of Education and Training (BEfr)
 - The Academy of Research and Higher Education (ARES) (BEfr)
- the Local Programme Councils in Sweden,
- the Apprentice Councils or Student and Apprentice Councils at county level in Norway;

⁵⁹ <https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/AKT/SCHLTHEM/SCHLAG/J2019/105Lehrlingsparlament.shtml>

- the School Local Education Committees in Denmark;
- the Provincial Vocational Education Councils in Turkey.

In the UK, some organisations cover the whole of the United Kingdom (i.e. National Society of Apprentices, Unite the union, UNISON, SEMTA) and others cover one of its nations (i.e. Institute for Apprenticeships and National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee in England, and the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board).

2.2.1.2 Sectoral scope

Most of the apprentice representation structures identified cover all the sectors, with the following exceptions:

- In Austria, Denmark and Germany youth representatives are supported by sectoral trade unions and their regional and national umbrella organisations;
- In France, the Consultation and Coordination Committee of the Apprenticeship in Building and Public Works;
- The Latvian Chamber of Crafts;
- In Lithuania, trade unions;
- In Slovakia, the Platform for Dual VET of the Automotive Industry Association;
- In Sweden, the local programme councils;
- In the UK, the National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (England), which focuses on the health sector, and the Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance;
- In Norway, the Councils for the vocational programmes at upper secondary level;
- In Turkey, the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen.

2.2.1.3 Membership requirements

Information on membership requirements was not available for all the organisations identified. Based on the information available, apprentice representation structures can have apprentices as direct members; bring together representatives of school-level apprentice/student associations; or combine individual and collective members. As an example of the latter, the Finnish National Union of Vocational Students (SAAKI) has three types of members: individual VET students, student unions in VET institutions, and trade unions.

In some cases, individual (official) members need to pay fees (e.g. in the Finnish Student Alliance OSKU, Italian Student Union) or may receive additional advantages if they do so (e.g. SAAKI in Finland, National Society of Apprentices in the UK). There may also be different types of membership status. For instance, the Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK) has 'joined members' for whom membership is free, and 'working members' who help run the organisation.

In the case of collective membership, members may be elected or designated by their home organisations, or volunteer. For instance, all student union representatives – elected by their peers – are eligible as members of the Icelandic Upper Secondary School Student Union, but other students can also apply for membership.

2.2.1.4 Funding

Funding mechanisms vary depending on the type of organisation⁶⁰. Information has been gathered on the funding mechanisms of youth or student organisations and unions. No evidence has been found of specific funding being allocated to apprentice representation activities in the other types of organisations (employers' organisations,

⁶⁰ Please note that information on funding was not available for all the representation structures.

associations of VET schools, chambers, employment services, consulting bodies at national, regional or local level, or other).

As for the funding mechanisms of youth or student organisations and unions, research findings reveal that:

- Youth or student organisations often receive government subsidies (as in the case of VSK (BEnl), FEF (BEfr), OSKU and SAKKI (FI), ANAF (FR), JOB (NL), SIF (IS), SSUN (NO)).
- Student unions may also collect membership fees (OSKU, SAKKI, JOB, SSUN). The Federation of Francophone Students (FEF) (BEfr) collects membership fees of student councils.
- In addition to funding for their operating costs, these organisations often have additional funds linked to specific projects (funded by EU structural funds, national government or other entities) or activities (e.g. events in schools) (VSK, OSKU, SAKKI, ANAF).
- Some have funding from partnerships with private companies or other entities (OSKU, SAKKI, ANAF).

As for youth representatives at company level in Austria and Germany, by Law, they can develop their representation function during working time:⁶¹

(In Austria,) youth representatives at company level can do their representation tasks during working time. This is stated by Law. They are also allowed to have 10 days of leave to participate in further learning linked to their work as youth representatives. Board members of regional and national representations are volunteers. They work during their leisure time. They are supported by staff funded by the trade union.

(In Germany,) youth and apprentice representatives (JAV) do the work in their working time. They meet once a week among themselves and take part in the Workers Council meetings too.

Source: KIIs.

2.2.2 Policy priorities of the organisation

The organisations **directly representing apprentices**, those representing VET students, and some of the wider scope organisations (i.e. representing a wider group of students, young people or professionals) have generally formulated priorities related to apprentice representation and the improvement of their situation. They commonly define priorities based on the needs of apprentices (e.g. the NSoA in the UK uses a survey to collect apprentices' views), and the current policy agenda in the country.

Some examples of policy priorities currently touched upon by apprentice representation structures entail:

- Improving the representation and participation of apprentices or VET students at local and provider level (VSK in BEnl; SSUN in Norway)
- Apprentice remuneration and working conditions (youth/apprentice representatives in trade unions in AT, DK and DE; NSoA in the UK)
- Financial and social support to students (dormitories, student housing and public transport in OSKU in Finland; grants for material in SSUN in Norway)
- Public funding of schools (OSKU in Finland)

⁶¹ Information not available for Denmark.

- Improving the image of VET (representatives in trade unions in DK, SAKKI in Finland, SIF in Iceland)
- Transition to employment (youth representatives in trade unions in DE)
- Ensuring the availability of work placements for all apprentices (Estonian School Student Council's Union)
- Access to further education (SAKKI in Finland)
- Access to internships and apprenticeships abroad (JOB in NL)
- Support to the design and implementation of policy reforms (VSK in BEnl; youth representatives in trade unions in DE; ANAF in FR)

Organisations where apprentices are **indirectly represented** through ad hoc or occasional consultation may address topics related to the above listed priorities. For instance, local programme councils in Sweden involve VET schools, employers, employer organisations and trade unions in discussions about working hours of apprentices, among other topics. However, none of such structures seems to have established priorities related to apprentice representativeness.

2.2.3 Links to European structures

Apprentice representation structures can have links to European structures such as the EAN, EAfA or other.

Interviewees from four of the **national apprentice representation structures** reported to have links with the **EAN**. These are the following:

- In Finland, SAKKI's (former) secretary general was a member of the EAN until recently.
- The National School Student Union of the Netherlands focusing on VET (JOB) is involved in EAN activities.
- The National Society of Apprentices in the UK is involved in EAN activities.
- The representative of apprentices and young employees of the German Trade Union Confederation explained that they have recently sent a request to have a member join the EAN.

Other national entities interviewed under this study indicated their awareness of the EAN but did not refer to specific links between this network and national bodies (e.g. the Federation of Free Trade Unions in Romania).

The National School Student Union of the Netherlands focusing on VET (JOB) considered as a **body directly representing VET students** is reported to be involved in the EAfA. In addition, the Labour Force Employment Organization (OAED) in Greece, the Consultation and Coordination Committee of Apprenticeships in Building and Public Works in France, and the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation - which have been considered under this study to be **bodies of indirect representation of apprentices**, through wider consultation - have presented a pledge to the EAfA⁶².

Another example of EU-level cooperation is **membership to an umbrella organisation**. The National Union of Vocational Students in Finland (SAKKI) and the National Student Union in Luxembourg are members of the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU);⁶³ the Flemish student umbrella

⁶² The following social partners interviewed under this study informed that they had presented pledges to the EAfA: the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, and the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union Solidarność (NSZZ "Solidarność") in Poland. Interviewees from national authorities often referred to their country national commitment to the EAfA and to their participation in EAfA activities (VET Centre in North Macedonia, Agency for VET and Adult Education in Croatia, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in the Republic of Serbia). However, none of these entities has been considered a representation structure as they do not consult apprentices

⁶³ <https://obessu.org/>

organisation (VSK) is a former member of this entity. The National Society of Apprenticeships is also a member of OBESSU and has a representative in the support staff of the EAN. The youth organisation of the national trade union GPA/djp in Austria is involved in the International Network of Youth Trade Unions.

Organisations interviewed under this study also referred to **participation in the following European activities:**

- Cooperation with Cedefop, for instance as a member of the Management Board (Employer Council for dual VET in Slovakia)⁶⁴.
- Participation in the European Skills Week and VET Excellence Awards (Labour Force Employment Organization (OAED in Greece).
- Occasional cooperation through Erasmus+ projects (Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic).

2.3 Types of methods/process in place for apprentice representation

This section provides an overview of the main trends and differences identified in relation to apprentice representation and consultation across countries. It discusses the following dimensions:

- Type and frequency of meetings and the extent to which apprentices are involved;
- Method(s) of selecting apprentices to participate in these consultation forums;
- Activities undertaken by organisations to consult apprentices;
- Aspects/ issues discussed with apprentices during these consultations;

2.3.1 Type and frequency of meetings involving apprentices

Considering the heterogeneity of the bodies involved in the representation of apprentices across the countries covered, the frequency and type of meetings show considerable diversity.

The national or regional structures **directly representing apprentices**, those representing VET students, and some of the wider scope organisations (e.g. representing secondary students) often organise official meetings or general assembly taking place with a set frequency, typically once a year. This is the case of apprentice national and regional assemblies in Austria; official meetings of the Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK); the OSKU assembly in Finland; or the SIF general conference in Iceland. In some cases, such forums are organised more frequently (JOB in the Netherlands organises official meetings three times a year; SSUN in Norway organises meetings 3-6 times per year) or less frequently (SAKKI in Finland holds biennial assembly meetings).

In addition to official meetings, some representation structures also organise **informal and less structured meetings**. For example, the VSK in Belgium-Flanders organises workshops and JOB in the Netherlands holds monthly members' meetings.

As for organisations where **apprentices are indirectly represented** through ad hoc or occasional consultation, **meetings** involving apprentices occur on an **irregular basis or may not take place at all**. In a few cases, apprentices do not take part in the meetings, but are represented through their teachers or employers. This is the case in Cyprus Apprenticeship Board and the Platform for Dual VET of the Automotive Industry Association in Slovakia.

⁶⁴ Other interviewed governmental agencies also referred to cooperation with Cedefop (Agency for VET and Adult Education in Croatia), ETF (Centre for Vocational Education in Montenegro) and EU processes (the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture explained that they were members of the ET 2020 WG on Vocational Education and Training). However, none of these entities has been considered a representation structure.

2.3.2 Method(s) of selecting apprentices to participate in consultation forums

Overall, information related to the method of selecting apprentices to participate in the consultation forums identified is rather limited. Interviewees, however, suggest that apprentices can become apprentice representatives through **election, delegation or simply by volunteering for the role**. Election is used to select youth representatives in Austria and Germany. An example is provided in the following box:

*In **Austria**, youth representatives at company level are elected by a youth assembly of all apprentices and young workers in a company, twice a year. A regional assembly of youth representatives by occupational sector elect a regional board of youth representatives once a year. Youth representatives delegated from regional assembly elect a national board by occupational sector once a year.*

Source: KIIs.

In other representation structures, it is typical for apprentice representatives to be **selected during the official board meeting or general assembly**. This is the case in the Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK), the two student unions in Finland (SAKKI and OSKU), and the National School Student Union of the Netherlands focusing on VET (JOB). In the UK, colleges ask for apprentices to volunteer for the National Society of Apprentices.

As for organisations where apprentices participate on an ad hoc or occasional basis, apprentices can be **recommended by enterprises** (Slovak Employer Council for dual VET), or VET providers (school principals can invite apprentices to Provincial Vocational Education Councils in Turkey).

2.3.3 Activities undertaken by organisations to consult apprentices

Besides formal and informal meetings, the general picture that emerges from the interviews suggests that a **continuous and direct exchange** exists at organisational level, between the companies or educational institutions and the apprentices. For instance, youth representatives at trade unions at company level in Austria are in constant contact with their colleagues. They often travel to meet apprentices, talk to them in person or via phone. As another example, in Greece, apprentices' supervisors consult with the employer and the students once a week or every two weeks. Similar activities were also mentioned by interviewees from Latvia, Slovakia, and Turkey. One interviewee also cited that apprentice consultation also involves consultation with parents of apprentices (Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic), whereby the company consults with its apprentices whilst also meetings with their parents.

Surveys are also used. In Finland an online VET student survey is conducted by the Finnish national union for students in vocational upper secondary schools (OSKU), in partnership with the National Union of Vocational Students in Finland (SAKKI). The survey is conducted every second year and the 2018 edition had dedicated sections on the VET reform and work-based learning for the first time. In the UK, the NSoA conducts a yearly survey to collect apprentices' views and decide what priorities the NSoA will focus on in the following year. In Germany, the German Trade Union Confederation consults with apprentices. Research findings indicate that greater efforts are required to protect the rights and working conditions of apprentices who report a decline in the quality of apprenticeship training. In the Netherlands, a large-scale satisfaction survey of MBO students called the 'JOB Monitor' is launched on an annual basis. The outcomes of the survey are used to inform policy developments related to VET. The JOB Monitor represents an example of how surveys could contribute to quality assurance at system level, whereby the survey outcomes serves as a useful source for policy makers and school leaders to inform policy developments

related to apprentice representation and VET more broadly. This may be especially useful in countries where apprentice representation is not yet developed.

2.3.4 Aspects/ issues discussed with apprentices during consultations

The aspects covered by consultations link to the organisation priorities (see section 2.2.2). Both unions and student or youth organisations seem to cover **work-related and training-related topics**. Some of the areas more often covered are remuneration, social protection, and training conditions (mentioned for instance by youth and apprentice representatives at trade unions at company level in DE, and SAKKI in Finland). However, the organisations other than trade unions sometimes have less competences or expertise in work-related topics. The representative of the Flemish student umbrella organisation (VSK) acknowledged for instance that this organisation is less knowledgeable in work-related topics and envisage building their expertise in the field if its members consider it a concern. A representative from the Finnish VET providers' association OPSO explained that they cannot influence aspects that fall under the labour legislation.

2.4 Enablers to apprentice representation and consultation

The key enablers of apprentice representation emerging from interviews with national informants include:

- A well-developed apprenticeship system with high levels of participation;
- The existence of strong representation structures at the organisational level;
- Awareness raising and capacity-building, and;
- The existence of mechanisms for an effective participation of apprentices in the governance of apprenticeships.

Having a **well-developed apprenticeship system with high levels of participation** is a sort of pre-condition for the emergence of apprentice representation structures. In countries where this condition is not met (BEfr, BG, CY, EL, LT, MT, RO, SI, SK, North Macedonia, ME), there is a low perception of a need for apprentice representation and policy priorities lie elsewhere (see section 2.5). As a concrete positive example, in Finland a new piece of legislation which will foreseeably increase take-up of apprenticeships among students, is expected to generate a greater demand for apprentice representation structures.

One key enabling factor is the existence of **representation structures at the organisational level** on which regional or national structures can be built.

Interviewees discussed different actions that could be considered to strengthen apprentice engagement at organisational level:

- Use of monitoring mechanisms to check if participation methods established by Law are being adequately implemented at school level (BEnl);
- Giving teachers the conditions to support student representation bodies, for instance by earmarking time for such activities (BEnl) or providing them with adequate training (FI);
- Creating sections for apprentices within student representation bodies (SK); or
- Providing financial incentives to school-level bodies (LV).

To stimulate the creation of apprentice representation structures, it is important to **raise awareness** of the potential benefits of apprentice representation at the collective and individual level, and to provide **capacity-building** to apprentices (mentioned by interviewees from BEnl, LV, PL, PT, and RO).

Regarding awareness raising, interviewees suggested the organisation of youth forums, conferences and other activities to promote the benefits of apprentice representation (HR, LV), and the use of internet-based tools to facilitate exchanges between apprentices and to gather their feedback (HR, LV, RO). Encouraging active

citizenship among young people and supporting youth associations in general is also expected to have a positive impact on apprentice participation (SI).

As a last enabler, for apprentices to participate, they need to see that their voice is actually coming across and making a difference. There need to be **mechanisms for an effective participation of apprentices in the governance of apprenticeships**. For instance, a few interviewees suggested the inclusion of apprentices in social dialogue (PL, PT) and sectoral bodies currently including only employers and education providers (e.g. sector-based skills councils in Finland).

Table 10 proposes a list of enablers of the development of representation structures, according to the type of structures that exist in each country. Even though all the enablers listed are relevant to all the countries, they may be more or less of a priority depending on the type of representation structures already in place. For instance, in countries where apprenticeship systems are not fully developed, in the first instance, it is important to raise awareness among policy makers, stakeholders and apprentices of the potential benefits of apprentice representation. In countries where there are already structures that represent apprentices or VET students directly, it is important to make sure that representatives have a say in the governance of apprenticeships.

Table 10. Enablers to the development of representation structures

Type of representation structures	Enablers
Direct representation of apprentices or VET students	Existence of mechanisms through which apprentice representatives input into decision making processes on the governance of apprenticeships.
Indirect representation: Wider-scope structures	Awareness raising among wider-scope structures of the need to promote a balanced participation of apprentices and other students or youth groups.
Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies/ Lack of structures / Existing structures only cover part of the apprentices	Provision of information and capacity building to apprentices on participation opportunities in existing structures. Awareness raising among policy makers of the potential benefits of apprentice representation. Awareness raising among apprentices of the potential benefits of apprentice representation. Awareness raising among relevant structures and stakeholders of the potential benefits of consulting apprentices directly (as opposed to collecting their opinions via third parties) and doing it in a systematic manner.
	Existence of representation structures at the organisational level. Provision of information and capacity building to apprentices on participation opportunities at the organisational and other levels.

2.4.1 Cross-country cooperation and the role of the EU

Collaboration between countries can help potentiate enablers of apprentice representation, and the EU can have a role in this. For instance, a large number of interviewees expressed the view that the EU could promote the benefits of apprentice

representation by supporting networking and mutual learning.⁶⁵ Many expressed the need for more opportunities to learn from other countries (in the form of study visits, or by promoting the exchange of good practices for example), particularly in countries with established representation structures. Conversely, the Dutch apprentice representation organisation (JOB) reported on progress made in relation to apprentice/learner representation and offered to serve as a good practice example during cross-border activities. An interviewee from the Federation of Free Trade Unions in Romania mentioned that the EU could provide guidance to countries on how to develop apprentice representation structures.

Interviewees from Latvia suggested that the EU could support the organisation of international events where apprentices would have an active position. A representative from the Portuguese VET provider association suggested that the EU could help bring members from representation structures in other countries to national events to share their experience and help launch the challenge of creating apprentice representation structures where these do not exist. Interviewees from Ireland and Slovenia mentioned that there is often limited information on EU actions and considered that dissemination among relevant national stakeholders and young people should be strengthened.

2.5 Barriers and challenges to apprentice representation

Challenges depend on the level of development of apprentice representation in each country. Where there are **no structures or only indirect representation** by means of consultation through wider bodies, one of the main barriers seems to be the **lack of development of the apprenticeship system and the low number of apprentices**. This is observed in a variety of countries where apprentice participation is supported, if at all, at the provider level (BEfr, BG, CY, EL, LT, MT, RO, SI, SK, AL, North Macedonia, ME).

Low development of the system and low participation in apprenticeships - examples

- In **Bulgaria**, apprenticeships are still implemented on a project basis and as such are not based on a legal framework or established and governance structure. This means there are no structures or supportive mechanisms for apprentice representation in place.
- In **Cyprus**, apprenticeships are a minor route (130 apprentices this year), 'last option' strand. Although the existing mechanisms for apprentice representation are considered appropriate (whereby apprentices may speak with their trainer or inspector who visits the school on a monthly basis), with so few numbers of apprentices, introducing additional apprentice representation structures may not be considered a policy priority.
- In **Malta**, there is only one apprenticeship provider (MCAST) and one of the interviewees explained that its student council is enough to ensure apprentice representation. A key challenge is ensuring apprentices following the school based

⁶⁵ GPA/djp (AT), Agency for VET and Adult Education and Ministry of Science and Education (HR), Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (CZ), Industrial Union Mining, Chemistry, Energy (DE), Ministry of Education and Culture, OPSO, OSKU and SAKKI (FI), Department on Vocational and Adult Education at the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (HU), Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (IE), Union of Students in Ireland (IE), expert at the University of Ljubljana and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (SI), Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic (SK), Employer Council for Dual VET (SK), ANESPO (PT), National Employment Agency (RO), National Society of Apprentices (UK), VET Centre (North Macedonia), Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (RS), Ministry of National Education (TR).

and work based component of their apprenticeship are aware of and have access to representation structures.

Source: KIIs.

Other barriers mentioned by interviewees concern the following:

- **lack of tradition of apprentice/youth representation in the country;**
- **legal requirements related to apprentices' age or status;**
- **difficulty in engaging apprentices,** and;
- **lack of support and capacity-building from relevant stakeholders** (see Table 11).

For instance, regarding the legal requirements, in Turkey apprentices under the age of 18 years are not eligible to join Trade Unions and cannot be members of NGOs. In Poland and Slovakia, apprentices cannot join trade unions because they do not have the status of employees.

Table 11. Barriers to the development of representation structures

Type of representation structures	Barriers	Country/ies where this barrier has been detected
Direct representation of apprentices or VET students	Lack of structures in small companies.	AT, DE
	Lack of structures in international companies operating in the country.	DE
	Limited autonomy of apprentice structures from workers' representation structures.	AT, DE
	Dual status of apprentices, as a student and as an employee. Their representation is divided between the world of education and work.	FI
	Lack of time of apprentices to participate in student union activities. In particular, those engaged in long-term work-based learning and older students with family responsibilities.	FI, NL
Indirect representation : Wider-scope structures	Imbalance in participation from apprentices compared to other students. Apprentices are harder to reach and engage.	BEnl, PT, RS
	Difficulty to persuade wide group of students (e.g. NO entire upper secondary student population) to support demands from apprentices and other vocational students.	NO
	Financial barrier	RS
	Lack of legal framework	RS
Indirect representation : consultation through wider	Low participation in apprenticeships, system still under development.	BEfr, BG, CY, EL, LT, MT, RO, SI, SK, AL, North Macedonia, ME

Type of representation structures	Barriers	Country/ies where this barrier has been detected
bodies / Lack of structures / Existing structures only cover part of the apprentices	Age of apprentices (legal requirement to join trade unions or other structures).	TU
	Status of apprentices. Where apprentices do not have the status of employees, there are barriers for them to join trade unions.	PL, SK
	Lack of engagement of apprentices in apprentice representation structures. Negative attitude towards trade unions.	HU, HR, LV, SI
	Lack of information and capacity building from trade unions, employers and public authorities on apprentice participation opportunities or other related topics such as trade unions' competences.	PL, RO
	Lack of political support or encouragement to apprentice representation or to civil society organisations in the country.	IE, SI
	Lack of tradition of apprentice/youth representation or civil society organisations in the country	AL, ME

Source: ICF based on KIIs.

In countries where apprentices are represented through **wide-scope structures** the main concern is the **imbalance in participation of apprentices compared to other students**. In several countries, apprenticeships are still regarded as a second option for students who do not succeed in academic education or other VET tracks. Consequently, apprentices tend to be less motivated students and it is expected that they will make less use of existing representation structures although actual data on the level of participation of apprentices is often unavailable. The following box provides an example from the Flemish Student Umbrella organisation.

Wide-scope structures: limited participation of apprentices. An example from Belgium-Flanders

In the yearly programme, the Flemish Student Umbrella organisation (VSK) has to show how it will represent all students (including the two main apprenticeship schemes: leertijd and DBSO (part-time)). As the country is in a transition from leertijd/DBSO to dual learning some money was earmarked for consultation on dual learning. The VSK board discussed at some point to include apprentices specifically on the board. However, the board (made up of students) decided against it as it did not want to exclude others who would want to actively be part of the board in favour of students that may not want to participate. The Flemish education and training system is characterised by a "waterfall system", whereby all students start at the same level and generally flow down the system whenever they do not fit. DBSO is considered to be at the bottom of the waterfall and its students often could not find a fit at any of the other levels. To include DBSO students is a major challenge. At the moment, of the 30 to 40 working members only 3-4 come from VET. None of them are from the DBSO.

Source: KIIs.

Where there are **direct representation structures**, barriers can come from an **uneven access to these structures for certain apprentices** due to the characteristics of their programme (e.g. lack of time for participation of those in long-term work-based learning), the type of company they work at (less representation structures in small companies and international companies), or their personal circumstances (older students with family responsibilities often do not have the time to participate).

Regarding the type of company, in Austria, apprentice representation is only possible in companies with at least five apprentices. In Germany, there is a similar requirement: there must be at least five apprentices or other VET students under 25 years of age or young employees under 18. Another barrier faced in these two countries is the limited autonomy of apprentice structures from workers' representation structures. In Austria where there is no workers' council it is difficult for apprentices to find an apprentice representation. In Germany, representation structures can only be created in companies where there is a workers' council.

Another barrier comes from the dual status of apprentices and the degree to which they are well represented both as employees and as students.

3 Inspiring practices from selected apprentice representation structures

This section presents inspiring practices from apprentice representation structures based on the four in-depth case studies produced as part of this study. It presents key insights into frameworks for consulting and representing apprentices, the methods of consultation used and considers the extent to which apprentice representation structures feed into policy developments. To facilitate the exchange of good practice, this section also provides insights into strengths of existing representation structures and factors that limit apprentice representation.

The four case studies are:

- JOB in the Netherlands
- Danish Union of Electricians
- Australian Apprentices Ambassadors
- Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)

In addition, this section draws on information collected through the mapping of representations structures undertaken in the UK – namely the National Society of Apprenticeships (NSoA). We focus on the NSoA as an organisation with responsibility for directly representing apprentices.

An overview of the selected case studies is presented in Table 12 below. The case study reports are provided in annex 4.

Table 12. Overview of selected case studies

Name of initiative	Type of representation structure	Summary of initiative
JOB in the Netherlands	Direct representation: VET students	Representation of apprentices in the Netherlands is guaranteed by legislation which requires all VET schools to have a school council. JOB is the VET student (including apprentices) representative body. JOB represents all

Name of initiative	Type of representation structure	Summary of initiative
		<p>students in MBO⁶⁶. Its main consultation activities are facilitated through school-based student councils. It also consults students through a survey and a hotline. JOB actively participates in discussions on VET policy and keeps close links with other players in this field. JOB obtains tangible results that ensure VET students' voices are heard. However, JOB's reliance on school-based student councils risks excluding students who are predominantly work-based.</p>
Danish Union of Electricians	Direct representation: apprentices	<p>All the members of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions have units devoted to apprentice representation. In the Danish Electricians' Union (DEF⁶⁷), this role is fulfilled by the national youth committee (DEFU⁶⁸). DEFU coordinates the work of the 11 local youth committees spread across the country and participates in the negotiations of collective agreements. It also devotes efforts to building apprentices' understanding of collective agreements and the benefits of being a member of a trade union (i.e. by organising training). DEFU's has a direct influence on the governance of electrician's apprenticeship programmes. Although they also try to contribute to general debates around VET, the Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union has a stronger role in this area.</p>
Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors Program	Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies	<p>The Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors Program (AAP) was initiated by the Australian Government in 2012. There are currently 288 Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors drawn from national awards processes (e.g. Australian Training Awards and WorldSkills Australia). Ambassadors are invited to promote the benefits of apprenticeships or traineeships to people of different ages, and business audiences.</p> <p>Rather than a vehicle to represent apprentices and their concerns/issues pertaining to their employment, the programme is a communication platform to share positive stories of people who have completed apprenticeships to raise the attractiveness of this career pathway. While there are no specific timings for ambassadors to contribute to policy discussions relating to the Australian Apprenticeships system, since the programme launched in 2012, Australian Government Ministers responsible for VET have called for two Australian Apprenticeships Roundtables at Parliament House in Australia's capital, Canberra to consult with ambassadors about the Australian Apprenticeships system. Their input out of these Roundtables has been shared with the policy development teams in the Department of Education and Training.</p>

⁶⁶ Upper-and post-secondary (non-tertiary) VET in the Netherlands is referred to as Middle vocational education (MBO). The MBO system recognises two types of training: Vocational Educational Pathway (BOL) and Vocational Training Pathway (BBL). JOB activities do not distinguish between BOL and BBL students.

⁶⁷ In Danish, 'Dansk El-Forbund'.

⁶⁸ In Danish, 'Ungdommens Landsudvalg'.

Name of initiative	Type of representation structure	Summary of initiative
Canadian Apprenticeship Forum	Indirect representation: consultation through wider bodies	The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) is a non-profit independent organisation. Its main role as a centre of excellence is in conducting apprenticeship research. In doing so, CAF captures and represents the interests of apprentices. CAF maintains reliable contacts with main actors in Canada who hold a stake in the field of apprenticeships (i.e. labour unions, education sector and equity groups, employers). Both policy makers and social partners use research outcomes produced by CAF to inform their policies and implementation actions.
The National Society of Apprentices	Direct representation: apprentices	The National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) was launched in 2014 and involves more than 120 training providers and employers, representing over 150,000 apprentices from all sectors and industries across the UK. The NSoA hold regular events and face-to-face contact is made with approximately 2,000 apprentices per year. Members of its leadership team are represented on the Apprentice Panel of the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education providing a direct link to contributing to government policy on apprenticeships.

Source: ICF based on case study material

Table 13 – Table 17 below presents a more detailed overview of the apprentice representation structure by organisational and representation type (in line with the typology presented in section 2). Table 13 to Table 17 also provide a summary of the differences and similarities between approaches in terms of methods of consultation, input into policy development, main achievements and strengths and limitations.

As an overall observation, the entities selected for the case studies represent very different facets of apprentice representation and further illustrate the diversity of apprentice representation as identified in section 2. The diversity of the entities covered by the case studies is indicative of the fact many countries are at different stages in establishing / strengthening apprentice representation structures and adopt different methods in doing so. They each serve a purpose and role in representing apprentices (in very different ways) and are positioned within a policy, economic and social context linked to either improving the quality of apprenticeships, enhancing the image of apprenticeships, promoting the take-up and mobility of apprenticeships (i.e. the four priorities of the EAfA) and/or creating a community of practice and identity of the apprentice. Collectively, it could be considered that they represent a holistic approach to apprentice representation. Each 'type' has its strengths and weaknesses and though their purposes are different, as representation 'types' they provide a broad and far reaching range of different mechanisms to collectively enable the voice of apprentices to be heard.

Table 13. JOB in the Netherlands

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
JOB in the Netherlands	JOB's organisational statutes state its main goal is to improve the situation for VET students regarding their education, including their school- and work-based learning ⁶⁹ .	Representation of apprentices in the Netherlands is guaranteed by legislation which requires all VET schools to have a school council. JOB receives government funding to represent MBO students. JOB's board members are enrolled in MBO themselves.	Meetings: Monthly meetings attended by school council representatives Special members meeting (rarely convened) Formal general member meeting three times a year Survey: Large-scale satisfaction survey of MBO students 'JOB Monitor'. JOB hotline: Available to MBO students experiencing	Meetings: Cost of expensive equipment and tools incurred by the apprentice. How to effectively evaluate and feedback on their courses. Survey: curriculum, school facilities and support, working conditions.	JOB actively participates in discussions on VET policy and keeps close links with other players in this field. JOB Monitor: results are published at school level and shared with schools' student councils. JOB hotline: complaints gathered twice a year and shared with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the	Agreement between JOB, the MBO Raad and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science regarding school expenses for materials. Agreement the MBO Raad and the Ministry will work with JOB to better facilitate student councils to exercise their right of consent regarding the school budget. Research outcomes informing the legal position of MBO students.	Strengths: Student representation is fixed in legislation. The 'JOB Monitor' has a wide reach – reaching different VET learners in different settings. JOB's place at the negotiating table with the Minister, MBO Raad and SBB gives MBO students a voice and the power to improve their situation. Limitations: School-focus of
Organisational type							
VET representation body							
Type of representation structure							
Direct representation on: VET students							

⁶⁹ JOB's dedicated website (in Dutch) can be accessed via this link: <https://www.jobmbo.nl/>

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
			issues in school or the workplace.		Agency responsible for inspections in Education.		this system risks excluding BBL students.

Source: ICF based on case study report

Table 14. Danish Union of Electricians national youth committee (DEFU)

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
Danish Union of Electricians national youth committee (DEFU)	DEFU's main goal is representing apprentices in the negotiations of collective agreements.	All the trade unions under the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions have units devoted to apprentice representation. These focus on apprentices' role as employees.	Meetings: DEFU participates in the meetings to negotiate collective agreements that take place every two or three years. Events: Participation in	Apprentices entitlement to payment during on-the-job and off-the-job periods. Payment of apprentices' work clothes.	DEFU tries to contribute to general debates around VET but the Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union is a stronger actor in this area.	DEFU is advocating for companies to continue paying apprentices' salaries also during off-the-job periods. The employer organisation	Strengths: DEFU ensures that apprentices' interests are considered in collective agreements. Limitations: DEFU is part of a trade union (DEF)
Organisational type							

Trade union youth representation on body			DEF congress that takes place every four years.		DEFU's has a direct influence on the governance of the electrician's apprenticeship programme, specifically on apprentices' working conditions.	TEKNIQ would like this requirement to be removed, and that apprentices would receive a state grant when attending school.	and cannot act independently from it. Its activities need to be in line with DEF policies.
Type of representation on structure		Apprentices are also represented as students. This is done locally at school local education committees, and at national level by the Danish Vocational and Technical School Students Union.				DEFU is advocating for employers to always pay for apprentices' work clothes.	
Direct representation on: apprentices							

Source: ICF based on case study report

Table 15. Australian Apprentices Ambassadors Programme (AAP)

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
Australian Apprenticeship Ambassadors Programme (AAP)	The AAP is part of the Australian VET Alumni.	The AAP was initiated in response to an independent report to government	The AAP has two 'tiers' of ambassadors. Tier 1 are public figures, tier 2 are apprentices selected through	Ambassadors provide information that can make apprenticeships more	Australian Apprentices Ambassadors who participate in events organised by	There are 288 Australian Apprentices Ambassadors who participate in events that are promoted via	Strengths: Ambassadors can make apprenticeships more visible in the public domain by

Organisational type	The main aim of the AAAP	in 2011 that highlighted concerns about the value of apprenticeships as a respected career pathway. In response to the recommendation, the Australian Government launched the Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors programme to boost the image and level of apprenticeship involvement across Australia.	national VET programmes such as WorldSkills Australia and the Australian Training Awards. Ambassadors promote apprenticeships. These are targeted towards potential apprentices (i.e. youth aged between 15 and 25) as well as at people whose opinions may influence youth in their decisions regarding taking up an apprenticeship (e.g. parents).	visible by sharing real stories on benefits and barriers of apprenticeships.	the Department of Education and Training, as well as at local events. Periodically, ambassadors are invited to government led roundtables on apprenticeships.	social media, and a dedicated website offering extensive profiles on the ambassadors. Data collected by the department indicate that, as of 2017, the programmes' media coverage and public relations activities have reached nearly 6 million people ⁷⁰ . The AAAP website delivery of key messages at live forums is supplemented by online articles and videos that convey the experiences of all the ambassadors in an accessible format.	sharing experiences of being an apprentice. All Ambassadors are former apprentices, and/or still in training. The AAAP scheme is predominantly a one-way representation structure for the Australian government to promote apprenticeships.
VET Alumni	is to assist in boosting the image and attractiveness of Australian Apprenticeships – rather than a vehicle to represent apprentices and their concerns/issues pertaining to their employment						
Type of representation structure							
Indirect representation							

Source: ICF based on case study report

⁷⁰ https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=PP_Ambassador

Table 16. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)	Centre of excellence in apprenticeship research.	No single entity for apprentice representation in Canada. Within each	Apprentice e-panel: The CAF e-panel involves about 2.800 apprentices who make themselves available for periodic consultations.	The funding model of CAF is aligned to its members. CAF carries out member surveys on what topics to research.	For research activities, the CAF receives federal funding from the government of Canada on a project basis.	The CAF is a leading body in the field of apprenticeship research. It produces evidence which is free from political bias or any agenda of lobbying parties.	Strengths: The CAF is a well-recognised body among policy makers, educators and labour unions.
Organisational type	Its main aim is to	province (10) there is an apprenticeship authority responsible for apprenticeship regulations and certification.			Survey data is provided in summary reports and made available online to its members.		
Non-profit independent organisation	conduct research and produce evidence to inform policy makers and other stakeholders on various apprenticeship-related topics, including on how to better reflect the needs of apprentices.	Widespread practice to undertake	Surveys are launched twice a year and dedicated to specific research topics.	Apprenticeship demographics (sector take-up), barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeships, financial constraints, supporting indigenous students in apprenticeships,		CAF promotes apprenticeship as a valued post-secondary pathway to youth, parents and employers, leading to rewarding careers in high-demand professions.	It gathers important stakeholders and motivated apprentices around the table – largely due to CAF’s influence and branding.
Type of representation structure		regular apprentice panel surveys (e.g. Employment and Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada conduct National Apprenticeship Surveys)	Round table events with apprentices across the country.	inclusive workplaces, pre-apprenticeship programmes, supporting women in apprenticeships,			
Indirect representation			National conference on apprenticeships (every two years).				Limitations: The majority of funding is project-based. Activities that require apprentices’ involvement (a

	the business case for apprenticeships.	panel survey, workshops, conference) can be challenging (time away from work, cost of participation).
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Source: ICF based on case study report

Table 17. National Society of Apprenticeships (NSoA)

Name of initiative	Main aim of the entity	Policy framework for apprentice representation	Methods of consultation	Consultation topics (examples)	Input into policy developments	Examples of main achievements	Strengths/limitations of apprentice representation structure
National Society of Apprenticeships	To capture and promote the voice of apprentices, on a local and national scale to ensure provision of quality apprenticeships and increased participation.	To support the implementation of quality apprenticeships in the UK (following a series of reforms in 2017), the NSoA, works with relevant bodies to improve the apprentice experience. It engages in dialogue and promotes participation in	Events: The NSoA hold regular events and face-to-face contact is made with approximately 2,000 apprentices per year.	Apprenticeship design; Apprenticeship quality; Apprentice rights and obligations; Youth policy; Political Engagement; Equal access to apprenticeships.	The NSoA has an Apprenticeship leadership team which has a representation of 5-6 members at the Apprentice Panel of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. This provides a direct link to contribute to policy debates/discussions	The National Society of Apprentices will: encourage apprentice learner voice Promote the public value of apprenticeships Support employers and training providers to develop better	Strengths: The NSoA has established a network of around 50.000 apprentices. The NSoA has established links with NUS, the Apprenticeship
Organisational type							
Student organisation	To research the views of apprentices in		National surveys and workshops on				

Type of representation on structure	relation to their apprenticeship experience.	public debates related to apprenticeships.	topics of key interest (e.g. cost of travel)	ns related to apprenticeships	apprenticeships and learner voice Work with relevant NUS Officers to promote the NSoA within NUS	Panel and National Apprentice Service.
Direct representation: apprentices	To involve apprentices in active citizenship and democracy.	.	Training opportunities for apprentices			Limitations: Difficulty in engaging apprentices; limited resources to undertake additional activities.
	To promote equality of access to quality apprenticeships.					

Source: ICF based on case study report

3.1.1 Lessons learnt and inspiring practices from the case studies

In this section we provide insights into key enablers influencing the extent to which existing structures and processes for apprentice representation concretely influence policy developments related to apprenticeships. In doing so we draw on lessons learnt from the case studies as summarised in Table 13 – Table 17. We present this information thematically and draw on the strengths of relevant experiences from each of the case study representation structures.

Apprentice representation reinforced through legislation

As discussed in section 2, in some countries apprentice representation structures as part of well-developed apprenticeships systems are reinforced through legislation. Concerning the case study countries, this is the case in Denmark and the Netherlands. In both countries, the strength of the apprenticeship system, prominent role of trade unions and use of collective agreements mean apprentice representation is facilitated. This tradition of apprentice representation exists in several sectors and is illustrated by, for example, the case of the **Danish Union of Electricians National Youth Committee (DEFU)** and the **JOB in the Netherlands**.

Whilst the **DEFU's** work is supported by the historical union structures in Denmark, the research findings suggest it is also reinforced by a general willingness in Denmark to listen to young people and ensure mechanisms are in place to allow their voices to be heard. For **JOB**, ensuring a quality learning experience is implicit in **JOB's** organisational statutes. It states its main goal is to have a positive impact on student participation in their education and training experience⁷¹.

Although apprentice representation is embedded within legislation, it does not necessarily guarantee consultation mechanisms reach all apprentice types. In the case of the **JOB**, whilst a range of consultation methods are used to encourage apprentice participation in representation structures, as BBL students (work-based apprentices) are primarily located within the workplace, it is reported they are not always aware of the representation structures available to them when alternating in the school-based component of their apprenticeship. Ensuring balanced participation of apprentices compared to other students is a challenge highlighted in section 2. Conversely opportunities to represent apprentice primarily based in the workplace is supported through trade unions in the case of the **DEFU**.

Policy commitment to apprentice representation

The case studies provide useful insights regarding the policy commitment to apprentice representation. A common theme emerging from the case studies is that the policy discourse around apprentice representation is 'live'. Ensuring the 'voice of the learner is heard' is reported to be recognised in the public domain. As such there is a general acknowledgement young people contribute to policy debates on matters that impact on their learning and in return see that their voices are making a difference. An example can be highlighted in the case of the **JOB** in the Netherlands.

Here in the Netherlands, "MBO students" regularly make the news: they stand up, amongst other aspects, for equal rights to university students, transparency on the legal position of MBO students, their right for consultation by school governance, equal opportunities for minorities at school and in the work place, school costs and international mobility.

Source: JOB case study

The case studies provide evidence of collaboration and awareness raising between the representation structure, policy makers and other key stakeholders and thus leading

⁷¹ JOB's dedicated website (in Dutch) can be accessed via this link: <https://www.jobmbo.nl/>

to tangible outcomes. As reinforced in all case studies, evidence of concrete results demonstrates to apprentices that the consultation processes they engage in are meaningful, that their input is taken seriously and contributes to making a difference in policy terms.

In the case of **JOB**, consultation with MBO students informs policy developments related to VET. Concrete evidence includes:

- Agreement between **JOB**, the MBO Raad and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science regarding school expenses for materials.
- Agreement between the MBO Raad and the Ministry will work with **JOB** to better facilitate student councils to exercise their right of consent regarding the school budget.
- Research outcomes used to inform the legal position of MBO students.

In the case of the **DEFU**, the organisation is currently involved in two main negotiations related to apprentice working conditions. These include:

- In Denmark employers are obliged to pay apprentices' salary during on-and off-the-job periods. However, the employer organisation TEKNIQ is currently negotiating for apprentices to receive a state grant instead of receiving a salary during off-the-job training. **DEFU** defends that salaries should be paid over the full apprenticeship duration and will defend this in the next round of negotiations.
- Where there are specific requirements for workplace clothing, **DEFU** argues that employers should be required to cover the cost of apprentices' work clothes.

In Australia, an independent report to government in 2011 recommended a set of strategies to improve the image and status of the Australian Apprenticeship to ensure Australia can meet the skills demands of the 21st century economy. In response, the Australian government launched the **Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors Programme (AAP)** in 2011.

Rather than a vehicle to represent apprentices and their concerns/issues pertaining to their employment, the Program is a communications platform to share positive stories of people who have completed apprenticeships to raise the attractiveness of this career pathway. While there are no specific timings for ambassadors to contribute to policy discussions relating to the Australian Apprenticeships system, since the program launched in 2012, Australian Government Ministers responsible for VET have called for two Australian Apprenticeships Roundtables at Parliament House in Australia's capital, Canberra to consult with ambassadors about the Australian Apprenticeships system. Their input out of these Roundtables has been shared with the policy development teams in the Department of Education and Training⁷². Whilst a valued opportunity to engage ambassadors into discussions about apprenticeship policy, formal, consistent representation mechanisms do not fall under the scope of the AAP.

In the case of the **Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)**, political commitment to apprenticeship research manifests in topics of specific social and economic interest – for example, research focused on the business case for apprenticeships in skilled trades; gender inequality in apprenticeships etc. The **CAF** has established itself as an organisation with a track record for producing non-biased, evidenced based research that feeds directly into apprenticeship policy. It consults widely and through different consultation methods with the apprentice population on a diverse range of topics (hence reaching a diverse range of apprentice types). The **CAF** firmly believes that the

⁷² Australian Department for Education and Training

highest impact in terms of participation in quality apprenticeships can be achieved through independent research which informs the decision and policy makers.

With regards to the **National Society of Apprentices (NSoA)** in the UK, members of the **NSoA** leadership team are represented on the Apprentice Panel of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. This is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education and provides an important opportunity for the **NSoA** to feed directly into government policy/debates related to apprenticeships.

In addition to political support for apprentice representation, financial commitment to apprentice representation structures is required. The key challenge reported by **CAF** is securing sustainable funding to enable the organisation to undertake its research and employ the range of consultation methods required to engage apprentices. Although the membership-fee base provides a sort of basic revenue, the majority of funding is project-based which does not provide financial certainty.

Image of apprenticeships

A key issue at European and national level relates to the need to improve the image and status of apprenticeships and stimulate policy debates in this area. The case studies offer examples efforts currently underway to improve the image of apprenticeships as valued and respected career options for young people. The **AAAP** as a highly branded initiative, backed by a Government led integrated communication strategy with an annual communications plan represents the most relevant example in this respect.

In this programme the role of the ambassadors, communicated through their lived experiences represent a type of 'community of practice' for apprentices and therefore is critical in terms of encouraging apprenticeship buy-in. As described in more detail in the Australian case study, emphasis is placed on the importance of former/current apprentices (as public representatives) who provide information to prospective apprentices when considering future career options.

For prospective apprentices, their 'real life' stories aim to promote the benefits of apprenticeships. This includes the potential for greater employability, greater job security, higher earning potential and, for many individuals, a broader range of work options upon completion. Experiences shared by the ambassadors also aim to address perceived barriers to participating in apprenticeships including lengthy durations, costs incurred for travel and equipment. The ambassadors who are employers also play a role in promoting apprenticeship to businesses to illustrate the benefits of hiring apprentices or trainees, encouraging equality in apprenticeship take up and promoting the business case for apprenticeships to small businesses. Accordingly, ambassadors visit business forums and meet employers to endorse the value of apprenticeships and allay any concerns they may have about hiring an apprentice.

In terms of raising the profile of apprenticeships more broadly, a suggestion put forward in one of the case studies is to introduce / enhance opportunities for apprentices to actively participate in events such as 'Skills Competitions' at International, European and/or national levels. The potential for apprentices to take part and win 'Skills Competitions' is considered as one way of improving the image of apprenticeships, thus raising the profile of VET in the public domain. As also mentioned in section 2, such events could also be used to bring members from representation structures to share their experience and help launch the challenge of creating apprentice representation structures where these do not exist.

For the **CAF**, the success in being able to gather the most influential stakeholders and motivated apprentices around the table is because of **CAF's** branding and impact of its research outcomes in policy developments.

Diversity of consultation methods to enhance apprentice representation

Section 2 discusses the strengths and limitations of different consultation methods used to engage apprentices in representation processes. Similarly, the case studies provide information on the variety of consultation methods employed to ensure the voice of a diverse range of apprentices is heard. These consultation methods tend to be based on meetings, surveys and workshops as summarised in Table 13 - Table 17. These methods are typically linked to the overall aims, objective and policy purpose of the representation structure in hand and are centred around:

- Improving working conditions
- Advocating for apprenticeship rights
- Improving the quality of the apprenticeship
- Promoting take up and image of apprenticeships
- Creating community networks of practice and reinforcing the identity of the apprentice

Although representation is facilitated by the engagement of apprentices in consultation processes, the case studies point to challenges experienced in reaching the diversity of the apprentice population and securing their participation. A key message from the case studies is the importance of finding ways to engage apprentices in topics that matter to them. To this end, the **CAF** launches a survey amongst its members to identify priority topics for research and trying to overcome barriers that limit apprentice participation in attend consultation events (e.g. due to financial costs, time off work). In the case of the **JOB**, representatives on the **JOB** board are MBO students who experience the daily reality of VET. They put forward priority topics for discussion during the different types of meetings hosted by **JOB**. In addition, the **NSoA** also asks its network of members their views on priority topics related to apprenticeships and VET more broadly.

Capacity building of apprentices

Participation in apprentice representation processes allows for a sense of 'community of practice' and empowerment on the part of the apprentice. All case studies provide evidence of creating conditions for apprentice representation. One dimension of this is asking apprentices to prioritise topics that matter to them (as discussed above). In addition, the case study examples from **Denmark** and the **Netherlands** provide evidence of a collective approach amongst education providers, government bodies, employers and trade unions to encourage participation in representation structures. In the case of the **CAF**, the apprentice e-panel also represents a strong example of community/network approach to engage apprentices in matters that impact on their learning. With a network of approximately 50,000 apprentices, the **NSoA** continue its efforts to support a community of apprentices.

The case studies also emphasis how important it is to the apprentices to feel they are being heard and that their contribution to policy discussions is taken seriously. As experienced in the case of the **CAF**, apprentices often communicate that they feel isolated in their apprenticeship journey. Participating in consultation process organised by the **CAF** (e.g. events, workshops) is reported to provide apprentices with a sense of belonging to a larger community who can support each other. A key strength to this approach is that it provides a channel of communication for apprentices from underrepresented and vulnerable groups (i.e. indigenous students, women in apprenticeship, apprentices with disabilities).

Although apprentice representation can be facilitated by wide and varied methods of consultation (and in some case by legislation), apprentices themselves may not be equipped with the capacity (in terms of skills or confidence) to engage in such structures. As reinforced through the case studies, apprentice representation could be further improved by ensuring apprentices are; a) suitably informed of structures

available to them and; b) confident enough to engage in matters of importance to them.

In the case of the **DEFU**, learners receive training to enable them to participate in union work and to help them understand structures within the labour market they are part of. Specifically, **DEFU** tries to promote raise the skills and profile of apprentices in the workplace by providing a 'Youth Foundation Course' that aims to teach participants about collective agreements and how to raise issues related to improving working conditions. Similarly, the **NSoA** offer training opportunities for apprentices in order to enhance their skills and confidence to engage in consultation process to support their representation.

Being part of a trade union, **DEFU** focuses its work on apprentice working conditions. It takes part in the meetings to negotiate collective agreements in the sector. **DEFU** represents 3,500 apprentices out of 20,000 members in the Danish Electricians' Union (DEF), and needs to make sure that apprentices' demands are not overseen in negotiations. This requires carefully considering what aspects should be prioritised in negotiations and making realistic and responsible proposals for the chairman to bring into the negotiations.

Mobility of apprentices across Europe and internationally

Two issues related to the mobility of apprentices emerge from the case study research. From the perspective of the employer, there is some concern employers need further information/reassurance about the benefits of apprentices participating in European/international mobility experiences. From the perspective of the apprentice, difficulty in identifying mobility opportunities as part of an apprenticeship scheme was highlighted. As identified in the Danish case study, there seems to be many mobility opportunities for students in general upper secondary education, but opportunities seem to be more limited for apprentices. Although Erasmus+ is also for apprentices, the actual exchange opportunities offered within Erasmus+ is reported to be oriented for university students and not apprentices following a primarily work-based route. This is a view shared by the NSoA.

3.1.2 Summary

As the case studies show, the strength of apprentice representation is largely influenced by the legal and institutional framework of the organisation involved, as well as historical, economic, political and social factors within individual countries.

The case studies emphasise the importance of encouraging participation in apprentice structures and acknowledge the challenge of engaging apprentices in consultation processes. They provide insights into how this challenge can be overcome – for example, offering varied methods for consultation, asking apprentice directly what topics are of key priority for them. In line with our findings presented in section 2, the extent to which apprentices are represented can however be questioned. Whilst there is some information on apprentices' level of participation (e.g. consulting with a network of over 50,000 apprentices), the extent to which the outcomes of their contribution in consultation processes influence policy developments is not always clear. Some concrete examples have been identified in the case of the **JOB** and **DEFU**. As also emphasised by the **CAF**, promoting the outcomes of consultation processes to demonstrate to apprentices, employers and other key stakeholders that their contribution is taken seriously is of key importance. As also discussed in section 2.3.4, the **JOB** monitor survey represents an example of how learner surveys contribute to quality assurance at system level. In the case of the **JOB** monitor, the survey outcomes serve as a useful source for policy makers to inform policy developments related to apprentice representation and VET more broadly.

Across the case studies there is evidence of efforts underway to promote and support an environment of apprentice participation in 'representation structures'. This

generates a community of practice and provides a network for apprentices to turn to. In the case of the **AAAP** this is facilitated by apprenticeship ambassadors who promote the value and experience of apprenticeships to prospective apprentices and employers. The notion of an extended community of practice is also facilitated through the **CAF** and the **NSoA**. Both organisations have extended networks they engage with on matters of apprenticeship policy and representation. A suggestion for the EAN to establish an extended network was put forward as part of the research on the role of the EAN and its future development.

The case studies reinforce a finding identified through the mapping of apprentice representation structures whereby apprentices following work-based routes are typically directly represented by trade unions. Those following school-based routes are typically represented indirectly by means of consultation through wider bodies. As observed through the case studies, it is also acknowledged that more could be done to actively consult with apprentices primarily following the work based route. Ensuring apprentices are informed of representation structures available to them whilst undertaking on and off-the-job components of their apprenticeship is a starting point in this respect. One suggestion is to make participation in representation structures 'easier' by establishing more 'non-school-based platforms' to enable apprentices to voice their opinions. Ensuring apprentices feel their voices are heard on matters that are of key concern to them is likely to increase interest in participation.

The case studies reinforce the need for existing stakeholders to collectively support apprentice representation. One suggestion is to encourage joint efforts between key stakeholders – including for example, trade union's youth organisation, education providers to support and facilitate collective approach to apprentice representation. Although the four entities covered by the case studies represent different representation structures, as organisational 'types', they provide a holistic approach to apprentice representation. They provide a range of consultation process to suit the different needs, status and localities of the apprentice set within the economic, political and social context within individual countries.

4 The EAN: current state of play and suggestions for future development

In this section we present key findings from the key informant interviews (KIIs) on the current role of the EAN and suggestions for its future development. It is based on information provided through KIIs with 15 EAN members and support staff; five representatives from European level organisations; and insights gained from country-level interviews undertaken as part of the mapping of apprentice representation structures at national level (see section 0).

The national level analysis is based on 79 key informant interviews undertaken at country level. Of these interviews, 21 interviewees reported an awareness of the EAN, though the majority indicated they had limited in-depth knowledge or direct experience of the EAN and its activities. The remaining 58 interviewees reported no awareness of the EAN. In the case where interviewees confirmed they were not familiar with the EAN, our country experts were asked to provide some background information on the EAN. Interviewees were then asked for their general views regarding the current role of the EAN and its future.

The key findings of the KIIs are presented according to the main themes covered in the interview topic guide(s). It should be noted that the topic guides are semi-structured and were tailored according to interview type and level of awareness of the EAN demonstrated by the interviewee. For this reason, not all interviewees provided a response to each individual question included in the topic guide. In addition, some of the sections below do not include an analysis of the county level interviewees. This is because detailed questions about the governance and working arrangements of the

EAN were not asked at national level. Instead a more general set of questions about the overall level awareness of the EAN, its activities and future role at national and European level were formulated for the national level interviews.

The KII analysis presented in this section should be read with these caveats in mind.

Insights gained through the European and national interviews provide important insights into the added value of the EAN and its future contribution in this area. For this reason, we present [stylised] quotations where relevant to accentuate key messages provided.

4.1 Progress of the EAN and contribution to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy

Overall, EAN interviewees reported that the progress of the EAN and its contribution to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy are in line with the age of the network, its current work pattern (in terms of frequency of meetings) and the level of financial and secretarial support it receives (see section 4.6 below for more details on this aspect).

The main accomplishments of the EAN were reported to be in relation to:

- Contribution to the **European Framework for Quality and Effective (EFQEA)**;
- Contribution to **policy developments** / discussions **related to apprenticeships at EU level** through the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA);
- Contribution to the European Youth Forum's Position on Quality Apprenticeships
- Contribution to wider youth policy debates;
- Development of the **seven priorities of the EAN**;

All EAN interviewees remain highly positive and ambitious about the EAN 'proactively' and 'routinely' contributing to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy in the future, while also indicating the obstacles for progress. Interviewees share the vision of the EAN as a network of national bodies dedicated to representing apprentices across Europe. A key aspect of this role is seen in sharing of good practice, promoting improvements in quality apprenticeships, lobbying for greater mobility and portability of apprenticeships and, overall, contributing to policy developments on behalf of the 'apprentice voice'.

The EAN is made up of both members of apprentices' representative organisations and apprentices from different European countries. This means having a broad vision of national strategies related to apprenticeships. Sharing best practices from different countries is a good solution for trying to improve the quality of apprenticeship throughout Europe (EAN interviewee).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from the EAN

Most of the interviewees representing European level organisations acknowledged that the EAN has started well and has made an important contribution to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy – most notably the EFQEA.

The most important thing to remember is that the EAN is now in place now. It is visible. Its members are inspirational. They are a great tool to promote apprenticeships. People respond to people. We should keep the network going, feed it and help it grow (interviewee representing EU level organisation).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from EU level organisation

Most interviewees in this category recognise a key role for the EAN in promoting quality apprenticeships and raising awareness of apprentice representation. One interviewee (European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)) noted that although the

role of the EAN in policy making is unclear, they endorsed the role of the EAN in raising awareness of issues related to quality apprenticeships and feeding these into political discussions at European level. To reinforce this view, another interviewee (Bertelsmann Foundation) highlighted the achievement of the EAN in bringing 'taboo issues' (e.g. gender inequality in apprenticeships, poor working conditions) to the forefront of discussions at European level.

The EAN are doing a 'fab job' and that it is important to keep in mind that for many of the members, their contribution to the EAN is voluntary. This is a big ask and members contribute because they care. In this sense it is important to capitalise on their enthusiasm but don't overcharge! (interviewee representing EU level organisation)

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from EU level organisation

One interviewee proposed that EAN should develop stronger links at national level and across VET sectors as there is currently limited awareness of the EAN and its potential role in contributing to EU priorities on apprenticeships policy. This point relates to a broader issue concerning promotional efforts to raise the profile of the EAN as discussed in more detail below.

Information on the EAN contribution to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy and progress to date was not collected at country level.

4.1.1 Relevance of EAN activities

Interviewees at national level were asked to share their views on the relevance of EAN activities to national policy priorities related to apprentice representation/apprenticeship policy. More than half of the national level interviewees providing information on this topic agreed that the **activities of the EAN are relevant to national policy priorities**. This relate to quality assurance, equality, contractual agreements between the employer and the apprentice, improving the image of apprenticeships, the need to provide relevant and up-to-date information on apprenticeships to learners (including employers and parents) and the mobility of apprenticeships. One interviewee suggested that national representatives on the EAN across Member States (and beyond) could help ensure EAN activities are relevant to policy priorities related to apprenticeships at national level.

EAN activities are definitely very relevant to our policy priorities, especially in relation to quality assurance and employment contracts but also anti-discrimination, some apprentices/students come from very poor areas or have disabilities (interviewee from Albania).

EAN's priorities are very compatible with our areas of interest ... as we focus more on quality assurance as a means to ensure we can build capacity in representation, we can convince decision makers that there is a need for representation from the student union, apprentices and from Trade Unions. We are also interested in the role of representation and social justice, recognising that apprenticeships are very male-dominated in Ireland and that accessibility for those with disabilities is a huge concern (interviewee from Ireland).

Source: ICF based on interviews with national informants

Given the diversity and specificities of VET systems and apprenticeship schemes across Europe, many interviewees at national level envisage a **stronger role for the EAN in awareness raising and promoting peer exchange in the field of apprenticeship policy and representation**. For instance, the representative of the National Union of Vocational Students in Finland (SAKKI) observed that information on VET reforms taking place in other countries, as shared by the EAN, has been useful to

inform the current VET reform in Finland. Similarly, a representative from the Académie de Recherche et d'enseignement Supérieur in Belgium-Wallonia suggested that the EAN could do more to establish contacts between Member States to facilitate the exchange of good practice in this field.

By contrast, five interviewees felt the EAN activities were **not relevant** to their policy priorities. For some interviewees, it was not clear how the activities of the EAN could be of relevance to their context given the diverse nature of apprenticeships across European and specificities of their own apprenticeship systems. Before concentrating on a European dimension of apprentice representation, one interviewee emphasised the need to focus on developing national apprenticeship structures. Another interviewee commented that their focus is currently developing bilateral contacts and that membership to the European Apprentice Network (EAN) is not on the policy agenda for moment.

4.2 Added value of the EAN activities

Overall there is a view from all EAN interviewees that **the EAN brings a fresh and young perspective to policy discussions related to apprentice policy** particularly during EAN meetings at European level. Indeed, this view was reinforced by most interviewees representing European level organisations.

The EAN members are young, dynamic, fresh and are the best ambassadors for apprenticeships (interviewee representing EU level organisation).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from EU level organisation

More specifically, the **added value of the EAN activities** from the perspective of EAN interviewees was considered to stem from:

- Contributing to policy debates related to apprenticeships at European level;
- Lobbying for the voice of apprentices at European level;
- Increased knowledge of apprentice representation structures at national level;
- Providing knowledge and expertise related to importance of apprentice representation based on the experience of experts on the ground;
- Providing guidance and information on aspects of quality apprenticeships.

As noted above, one interviewee representing an organisation at European level (Bertelsmann Foundation), sees the added value of the EAN in tackling sensitive issues such as apprentice pay and diversity in apprenticeships head on. In this respect, the EAN is perceived as promoting a much needed open and constructive dialogue on such issues. Two interviewees express the need to capitalise on the EAN and contribution of its members and continue to support its further development.

A contrasting view on the added value of the EAN was put forward by two other KIIs, one representative from the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) and one from the ETUC). From the perspective of the ACVT representative, in countries where apprentice representation is guaranteed by legislation then the added value of the EAN may be limited. As such, it is necessary to determine the appetite for the EAN and its potential at national level before enlarging or intensifying the EAN at European level. From the perspective of the ETUC representative, there should be more concrete outcomes from the EAN before judgements on its added value can be considered.

Based on information collected at national level concerning the **added value of the EAN at the European level**, of the 23 interviewees providing information on this question, 16 interviewees considered that the EAN has added value. The added value was considered to stem from:

- Increasing knowledge of apprentice representation structures across Europe and sharing of best practice;

- Creating links and initiating dialogue with European social partners;
- Including apprentices' expertise in EU level discussions; and
- Raising the role of apprentices in policy making.

The EAN could bring value by encouraging the exchange of information and the sharing of knowledge and practices amongst Member States... (interviewee from Romania).

In order to make a broader impact, the EAN should become a truly representative organisation; this means taking into consideration who the EAN members are and how their work could be strengthened. Apart from having a clear agenda there should also be a very clear annual programme, a plan of activities as well as defined monitoring and evaluation measures in order to assure stable performance and quality outcomes (interviewee from Slovenia).

Source: ICF based on interviews with national informants

By contrast, three interviewees were either unsure about the added value of the EAN or believed its added value at European level is limited. Two interviewees questioned whether EAN activities could lead to something tangible in terms of reaching out to apprentices, influencing policy or the actual situation of apprentices.

One interviewee expressed the view that it is too early to judge the added value of the EAN given it was established relatively recently – a view previously expressed by one representative of a European level organisation.

Fourteen interviewees expressed that the EAN has had some **added value at national level**. Added value is seen in EAN's role in:

- Facilitating the exchange of best practice related to apprentice representation and apprenticeship policy across Europe;
- Lobbying for the voice of apprentices;
- Providing information on rules and regulations related to the mobility of apprentices.

We see added value of the EAN at national level provided that will get actively involved in capacity building activities, put in place representation structures and bring practices from other countries that proved to be effective (as in the case of Austria) (interviewee from Romania).

EAN activities could add value – especially for countries starting from such a low base in terms of representation structures. It might also help to have the backing of a larger organisation that has credibility with the government to try and address the issue of apprentice representation (interviewee from Ireland).

The EAN meeting in Malta in May 2017 was an eye opener for us...thanks to the student participants who underlined that apprenticeship professionals in VET institutions have a tendency to discuss with each other rather than with the students/apprentices. As a result, we have made the decision to involve student union members to all meetings as an expert. There is also a stronger collaboration with other key stakeholders which will ensure better policy impact (interviewee from Finland).

Source: ICF based on interviews with national informants

By contrast, nine interviewees were unsure about the added value of the EAN at national level or believed its added value is limited. One interviewee expressed that European advice at the national level is often not applicable as the system of each

Member State is very different. In the case of Albania, it was noted that there are a number of existing organisations (Albanian Skills, Albanian Alliance for Apprenticeships, Regional Youth Councils etc). Adding another organisation with the same/similar scope of activities would mean creating a surplus and duplicate of efforts.

4.3 EAN membership and selection procedure

EAN members are selected according to selection criteria established as part of the open calls for EAN members in 2017 and 2018 whereby participants must be:

- Under 30 years old;
- An apprentice/recent/former apprentice/student; representation or active nationally/internationally on VET/apprenticeship policy;
- Motivation to contribute to the EAN work.

As part of the selection process, attention is placed on having a balanced composition in terms of gender, current/former apprentices, secondary school/higher VET students, geographical spread and type of organisations individuals represent.

In going forward, EAN interviewees expressed the view that the selection process should be further reinforced to ensure a more balanced composition (in order of most to least reported) in terms of:

- Age: The age range of the EAN members should be extended to be representative of adult apprentices.
- Representative type: There should be an equal balance of current/former apprentices in addition to representatives from a range of different organisation types e.g. representatives from Higher VET and youth organisations;
- Gender: The issue of gender equality in apprenticeships continues to be a key challenge across sectors and countries. Gender balance should be given a greater focus within the EAN – starting from the selection of its members.

As part of the selection process, EAN interviewees also emphasised the need for prospective members to suitably experienced in apprenticeship policy and practice. The issue of training and development of EAN members is discussed in more detail in the section below.

Information on the membership and selection process to the EAN was not collected at country level, however some interviewees at national level expressed the view that representatives to the EAN should be elected from national structures.

4.4 The EAN as a centre of expertise

The diversity of EAN members (in terms of their education/employment background and the countries/organisations they represent), is perceived to be of high value and key to the success of the EAN.

The EAN brings together a range of views from different countries, so they know what's going on. The EAN is aware of issues on the ground, as many members are also involved in youth organisations. This provides a good level of expertise that materialises in solutions such as the European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships (EAN interviewee).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from the EAN

Whilst the expertise of the EAN is considered rich, efforts are needed to optimise the knowledge and expertise of its members further. There is a clear view from most EAN interviewees that existing and future members would benefit from **capacity building** to support their contribution to the EAN. This includes training and development opportunities related to organisational skills, public speaking, and enhancing

knowledge and understanding of European policies related to apprenticeships. The knowledge and expertise of the EAN could be further enhanced by ensuring EAN members represent a broader balance of different organisational types (e.g. employers, trade unions, youth organisations) as noted above.

Several EAN interviewees highlighted difficulty in ensuring consistent involvement from EAN members and **retaining knowledge and expertise** within the network. This is due to a high turnover of representatives as members are typically in a transition period and likely to move on in their education and employment pathways. Introducing an 'EAN alumni' has been proposed (by two EAN interviewees) as a way of retaining the knowledge and expertise of the EAN beyond the timeframe of the members' mandate (that is also considered to be relatively short).

Regarding the EAN as a 'centre of expertise', there is a shared view amongst the EAN interviewees that the **EAN has a role to play in raising awareness of apprentice representation structures** and promoting peer exchange in this area. This view is consistent with those expressed by interviewees at European level who also envisage a broader role for the EAN in promoting the benefits and value of apprenticeships and providing information to young people, employers and parents about career options upon completing an apprenticeship. As expressed by one interviewee at European level, this reinforces the need for EAN members to be equipped with the knowledge and expertise related to apprenticeship policy and practice at national level.

The EAN has a role to play in promoting peer exchange ... It has a number of members who are influencing the development of national apprentice representation structures in their own countries. It is not a case of copy pasting structures. The EAN could facilitate the exchange of good practice (EAN interviewee).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from the EAN

Information on the knowledge and expertise of EAN members was not collected at national level.

4.5 Communication channels and tools

The majority of EAN interviewees share the view that the communication channels in place at present are sufficient and reflect the fact the EAN is still a relatively new organisation. Internal communication is facilitated by WhatsApp, 'Base Camp' and 'Google Drive' which are reported to be working well. Although Twitter is also used by EAN members, it is reported that communication flows in general tend to fluctuate between EAFA events. Overall, **extra effort is required to enhance communication flows between members** and maintain momentum between EAN events – though keeping in mind members contribute on a voluntary basis and also have 'day jobs' to attend.

Regarding external communication channels, the EAN website, *Twitter*, LinkedIn, Youtube and Facebook are used - though a greater focus on the use of EAN website and *Twitter* was reported. The majority of EAN members share the view that as the EAN continues to grow, the website should evolve, and greater use should be made of social media. In terms of *Twitter*, one EAN interviewee emphasised that whilst this has potential to reach policy makers, it has relatively limited capacity in terms of reaching the public. Making **greater use of social media to raise the profile of the EAN**, connect with young people (and their parents) and promote the importance of apprentice representation is consistent with the views of interviewees from European level organisations.

The EAN would hugely benefit from media efforts to raise its profile (interviewee representing EU level organisation).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from EU level organisation

To support the overall improvement of the EAN's communication channels, three EAN interviewees highlighted the **need for additional capacity/resources**. To this end, one EAN interviewee suggested having a dedicated EAN member of staff (supported by an ad hoc budget) to take charge of communications.

Greater use could also be made of existing platforms to promote the EAN at national and European levels. Two EAN interviewees identified the EAfA and VET related events (e.g. VET Skills Week) as strong channels of communication to reach organisations, lobby for apprentice representation structures, and to continue raising the profile of the EAN. In addition, one EAN interviewee emphasised that EAN members should continue to promote the role of the EAN and its activities through their own representative structures at national level.

Although information on the communication channels and tools of the EAN was not collected at country level, some interviewees at national level highlighted the need to promote the EAN and enhance its attractiveness and visibility to apprentices to extend its membership. Moreover, the high number of interviewees unaware of the EAN suggest the need for enhanced media efforts to raise the profile of the EAN. The need to improve awareness of the EAN at national level and across the VET sector was also highlighted by two interviewees representing European level organisations.

4.6 EAN governance

In terms of the overall governance of the EAN, there was a clear message from the majority of EAN interviewees and those representing European level organisations, that there is a **need for a stronger governance structure for the EAN**. A key message from the EAN interviewees is that the **EAN lacks a 'formal mandate'** – though there is no clear consensus on what a 'formal mandate' might look like. Based on current practice there is a shared view amongst EAN interviewees that the EAN members should continue to inform the mandate. However, there is a strong view from at least two interviewees that the EAN mandate must be representative of the apprentice population and thus its members should be elected from national structures. Additional views related to the EAN mandate is that it should cover a longer time frame than at present and that it should set out clear roles, responsibilities, priorities and expected outcomes of the EAN activities.

Whilst most reference was made to the need for a clear mandate for the EAN, two interviewees recommend changes to the existing governance structure. Based on the governance arrangements of the Spanish Apprentice Network, one interviewee suggested the EAN could establish a smaller 'EAN board' based on robust selection criteria to oversee the coordination and implementation of the EAN activities. This board could run alongside an extended 'network of EAN members'. This structure could allow for all parties interested in apprenticeship policy / apprentice representation to join the EAN 'extended' network. The notion of a smaller, more formal 'EAN board' was also proposed by one EAN interviewee who could envisage more robust reporting arrangements between the EAN 'board' and DG Employment.

In terms of the status of the EAN, a vision shared by many of the EAN interviewees is that the EAN should hold a similar status to other relevant stakeholders at the EU level such as OBESSU and the EYF. In this respect, the EAN should be represented on all main/related working groups at European level, e.g. ET2020 Working Group on VET, groups related to VET and youth policy more generally.

One third of EAN interviewees referred to the EAN as a 'critical partner' on a European platform related to apprenticeship policy. These views are not entirely consistent with those expressed by interviewees representing European level organisations. One interviewee asserts that the EAN should not be considered as a political body and should remain as an 'informal network' with a role to play in awareness raising. It was

further noted that the EAN operations could be based on yearly action plans, receive dedicated Erasmus+ funding, and be obliged to contribute to capacity building in relevant policy networks on matters related to apprentice representation. Conversely, one interviewee in this category commented that the EAN would benefit from having a 'permanent office with a dedicated secretariat' though indicated this type of initiative tends to be funded as a project-based initiative rather than by an operating grant.

4.7 Resources and working methods

Regarding availability of current resources, most EAN interviewees referred to the **need for financial support** to enable the EAN to meet its objectives. EAN interviewees acknowledge the role of the current secretariat provided by OBESSU and EYF but felt the level of contribution required for the running of the EAN is not sustainable. The majority of EAN interviewees support the idea of a dedicated secretariat with at least one staff member who has the EAN as his/her main role. Duties could include steering EAN communication, organising EAN meetings, promoting the EAN with a view of enlargement, fund raising (hence not solely relying on European funding), provide briefings to new members. This view was reinforced by one interviewee from a European level organisation who expressed the view that a dedicated secretariat could help improve the coordination of the EAN activities and ensure a greater presence in European activities related to apprenticeship policy and representation. Information collected through such participation could be disseminated back to the EAN members and thus into national representation structures.

In terms of current working methods, as the EAN meetings are linked to the EAfA meeting schedule, the majority of EAN interviewees emphasised that the **scheduling of the EAfA meetings** (normally during the week) **does not always facilitate participation** by EAN members who are apprentices. Moreover, the duration of the EAN meetings does not allow sufficient time for the EAN to discuss topics, plan activities and next steps. The majority of EAN interviewees expressed the view that extended meeting times could help address this.

Several EAN interviewees highlighted a concern that **members are not always permitted days-off** from employers to attend meetings of EAN since it is a voluntary activity. This issue needs to be considered when scheduling (e.g. weekend meetings) and finding a solution to ensure members not able to attend meetings in person can contribute using alternative means (e.g. written contributions, web-streaming). The challenge of ensuring apprentice participation in representation structures was also highlighted by two interviewees representing European level institutions, who expressed the need for EAN meeting arrangements to consider the working schedule of apprentices.

Some EAN interviewees felt that the EAN meetings should be managed more carefully. Three interviewees reported occasions when EAN meetings were mostly taken up with introducing new members and recapping on material covered in previous meetings. For apprentices booking annual leave to attend EAN meetings, the interviewees were of the view that meetings should be used for knowledge sharing, decision making purposes, to address issues at hand and capitalise on the knowledge and experience of apprentices/all EAN members more effectively. Ensuring EAN members responsible for organising meetings are suitably experienced and trained to facilitate and manage meetings was expressed by a third of the EAN interviewees. As such, **more structured meetings with a clear purpose** linked to concrete activities should be organised. Moreover, preparatory work, background information, introductions on new members, main policy developments can be shared in advance of meetings.

In terms of additional working methods to enable the EAN to meet its objectives, at least half of the EAN interviewees suggested that peer learning activities (e.g. study visits alongside EAfA meetings) could be undertaken to learn more about apprentice

representative structures and as an opportunity to meet apprentices in different settings/countries.

Information on the communication channels and tools of the EAN was not collected at European or national level – though a few interviewees (two at European level and one at national level) echoed the challenge of engaging apprentices due to work commitments and transient nature of apprentices.

4.8 Advocacy and outreach role

From the perspective of the majority of EAN interviewees, the long-term goal is to ensure representative structures are in place across all European countries to allow for the direct representation of apprentices. To achieve this, most EAN interviewees envisage the EAN as a network comprising of a representative from every Member State on the EAN.

To ensure EAN representatives are truly representative of all apprentices, there is some appetite for the EAN to be a body of elected representatives from organisations representing apprentices across all Member States (a view shared by some EAN interviewees and interviewees at national level). In countries with established apprentice representation structures in place (e.g. Netherlands, Finland), there is potential to learn from existing representation structures – particularly in relation to democratic representation models whereby individuals are elected to representation structures.

Regarding the role of the EAN in engaging with other relevant bodies or networks at national level, the majority of EAN interviewees envisage a role for the EAN in raising awareness of apprentice representation and promoting quality apprenticeships at national level. However, some EAN interviewees recognise the challenge of reaching other relevant bodies or networks, particularly in countries where there is no EAN representative. The outcomes of this present study is expected to provide information on relevant bodies/ network at national levels. Although this study did not explore collaboration between the EAN and other networks/services at European level, opportunities exist to create bridges between the EAN, EuroApprentice and the Apprenticeship Support Services. Collaboration between these networks/services could help raise the profile of the EAN and its activities and promote the importance of apprentice representation.

Together with continued involvement in EAfA and other EU related events, these were highlighted as key channels for the EAN to tap into to engage with other relevant bodies and networks at national level. Some EAN interviewees also emphasised the need for EAN members to capitalise on their existing networks to the extent possible. An example of this can be highlighted in the case of the NoSA who circulate relevant information obtained through participation in European level meetings/events with its current members.

To further support the EAN in its efforts to establish contacts at national level, the need for peer learning activities in countries of EAN members (as a starting point) could be used to establish new contacts was proposed by a third of EAN interviewees. This view is consistent with more than half of the interviewees representing EU level organisations who also suggest that the EAN should organise study visits as an opportunity for members and participants to learn from other structures and disseminate information to help build national representation structures. This is considered less of a top down approach but instead, an approach that is based on peer and mutual learning.

Many countries do not have apprentice representation structures. If this could be established in each Member State then this would help promote the visibility of

apprenticeships. Need local networks. They could then be joined up through the EAN and best practice could be shared (EAN interviewee).

Source: ICF based on interview with representative from the EAN

Additional suggestions with regards to outreach activities at national levels were offered by interviewees representing organisations at European level and through the case study research. For example, the EAN could:

- Launch digital campaigns on issues related to apprenticeships. This could be coordinated by the EAN and disseminated on a national level.
- Establish 'day of the apprentice' all relevant bodies and networks could come together virtually, physically to celebrate the day of the apprentice!
- Launch a united 'hashtag' as a European body/network for apprentice representation.
- Promote the use of apprentice surveys and share good practice based on established survey methods (e.g. the Dutch 'JOB monitor')⁷³.

Information on the advocacy and outreach role of the EAN was not collected at country level, however one two interviewees stressed the need for the EAN to engage trade unions in discussions related to apprentice representation structures.

It would be a good idea for EAN to engage more directly with trade unions [in Ireland]. The EU needs to demonstrate best practices policies for apprentice representation across Europe. A key issue is reaching out to employer organisations that don't want to engage with trade unions. Quite often there is no way to meet or talk to the apprentices. It's very hard to make apprentices aware that unions are there, particularly as there is no formal way to reach apprentices in the work place. We would like to make apprentices more aware of possible structures available to them and help them understand the importance of representation, but there are so many barriers to this. There is a role for our national bodies to inform apprentices. If there was some kind of EU institutional support for making that happen, would be very helpful (interviewee from Ireland).

4.9 Contribution of the EAN to EU Youth Dialogue

Interviewees were asked to share the views on the extent to which they envisage a potential role for EAN in contributing to youth policy at EU level, for instance through the youth dialogue process. Only four EAN interviewees responded to this question. Though the level of detail provided by the interviewees was relatively limited, the general view is that there is potential for the EAN to contribute to the EU Youth Dialogue Process, noting the youth dimension is much broader than apprenticeships and the aim of the EAN. Two EAN interviewees emphasised the need for an apprenticeship specific dimension and would expect closer aligned to apprenticeships under the next EU presidency in this field. Finally, one interviewee noted that it is difficult for non-national bodies to be involved (e.g. INGO) in the EU Youth Dialogue process.

Information collected from the national level interviews regarding the role of the EAN in contributing to the EU Youth Dialogue Process was also limited (based on feedback from thirteen interviewees). Overall it can be surmised that there is a general support for the **EAN contributing to youth policy at EU level** (for instance, through the European Youth Forum). One interviewee suggested that the EAN should promote a tripartite dialogue, involving school managers and unions, but also apprentices in contributions to youth policy at EU level. Another interviewee expressed the view that

⁷³ See Dutch Case Study

the EAN could influence youth related policies and participate in processes of decision making. One interviewee referred to specific topics the EAN could contribute in Youth Dialogue Processes, for example reducing exploitation of vulnerable young workers in relatively non-unionised industries (e.g. catering, HGV drivers).

A role for the EAN in contributing to youth policy at EU level..? Yes, why not! (Interviewee from Luxembourg).

4.10 The future of the EAN

In this section, we provide a summary of the key findings relating to the future of the EAN. The information is presented under key themes outlined in the topic guide and those that emerged through the research findings.

4.10.1 EAN as an umbrella organisation

Almost one third of EAN interviewees envisage the EAN as an umbrella organisation – operating as a high-level EU platform with at least one apprentice representative from each Member State.

As an umbrella organisation there is a consistent view across all interviewee types that the EAN has a potential role to play in operating as a network of national bodies dedicated to representing apprentices across Europe. A key aspect of this role is seen in supporting knowledge-base and mutual learning in apprentice representation at both EU and national levels with potential to be part of a wider approach to developing the representation of VET learners more broadly.

As previously noted, for the EAN to be a representative structure of national bodies representing apprentices, a view expressed by some EAN interviewees and a small number at national level, is that the EAN should consist of elected representatives from national structures with an elected board. The assertion is that elected representatives would be in a stronger position to represent apprentices and thus routinely contribute to policy developments on behalf of the 'apprentice voice'.

Interviewees at national level providing information in relation to the role of the EAN as an umbrella organisation (seven interviewees), identified additional and more specific roles for the EAN. This includes:

- Sharing best practice on apprenticeship systems across European countries on specific topics e.g. addressing inequalities in apprenticeships; apprenticeships to support the integration of migrant learners into the labour market;
- Promoting the mobility of apprentices;
- Commissioning comparative research and analysis (or identify the topics for this); and
- Organising peer learning activities.

The role of the EAN in raising awareness, sharing of best practice and commissioning comparative research is consistent with the views expressed by interviewees representing European organisations.

'The EAN should be a place that allows for the exchange of ideas and good practice related to apprentices. It has a role to play in managing/facilitating common projects across the EU' (interviewee representing EU level organisation).

Source: ICF based on interviews with representatives from EU level organisation

4.10.2 The role of the EAN in producing guidelines

There is a view among EAN interviewees that the EAN has a potential role to play in producing guidelines related to EU priorities for apprenticeships. This view was

reinforced by over a third of interviewees at national level who see a role for the EAN in producing:

- Guidelines and good practices on how to promote apprenticeships among young people and their parents;
- Guidelines offering practical information on the roles and responsibilities of VET professionals;
- Guidelines on how organisations/ representatives of associations are invited to participate in EU structures;
- Guidelines on how to determine/select apprentice representatives.

Not only should the EAN produce guidelines, but they should also take action towards the implementation of the guidelines and actively monitor the compliance with common standards at the national level. The EAN standards should be complimentary to the standards established by the European Trade Union Institute - and the European Trade Union Confederation. The EAN should enhance its collaboration and consultation with these organisations to create a better synergy and work towards common goals for the benefit of apprentices (interviewee from Romania).

It would be beneficial to have some materials where we could find some inspiration, to provide best practices, recommendations, what works and how (interviewee from Slovakia).

At European level it would be helpful to show Member States what is expected or meant by representation. The EAN through EU support should try to support the right bodies to attain the right representative structures (interviewee from Ireland).

Source: ICF based on interviews with national informants

By contrast, thirteen interviewees at national level were opposed to the idea of the EAN producing common standards for guidelines and expressed concerns summarised as follows:

- It would be very difficult to develop standards that are adequate to the diversity of apprenticeship systems across Europe;
- Countries with well-established representation structures in place may not support the development of common standards or guidelines; and
- Countries with no apprentice representation bodies would not be able to contribute to the development of the standards or guidelines at the same level as the other countries (asymmetrical representation).

One interviewee commented that guidelines would only be valuable if modelled on well-developed apprenticeship systems (e.g. in Austria and Germany). Another interviewee expressed the view that new guidelines may not be required due to other policy developments and existing tools in the field (e.g. Riga Conclusions, EAFA). Instead, interviewees mainly emphasised that the EAN has an important role in facilitating cooperation, understanding, and exchange of good practice related to quality apprenticeships across Europe (for instance through peer learning and networking activities and cooperative projects). Given the diversity of VET systems and apprenticeship schemes across Europe, these views are consistent with half of the representatives from European level organisations who questioned the added value of the EAN producing common standards given that in some countries apprentice representation is guaranteed by legislation.

4.10.3 Suggestions on how the role of the EAN can be strengthened

In this section we provide a summary of information provided by all interview types in relation to how the role of the EAN could be strengthened:

- The EAN should continue its efforts to influence policy and promote apprenticeships to young people, their parents and employers. It now needs to launch into a 'snowball effect' and requires support from European and national levels to evolve;
- In relation to the mobility of apprentices, the EAN could contribute to policy developments to ensure structures are in place to allow for a quality experience as apprentices move from one country to another;
- The EAN should offer more internet activities and online communication about the role of the EAN, its achievements and future activities;
- At the European level, the EAN should hold a similar status to that of OBBESU and the EYF;
- The EAN should expand its membership structure to a more diversified base. This could include employers' associations, NGOs, youth organisations so that the apprentices' outreach is more effective;
- The EAN should have regular meetings and rotation of 'elected' representatives;
- The EAN should be a place that allows for the exchange of ideas and good practice related to apprenticeships. This can be supported by a range of capacity building instruments such as study visits, supporting national working groups, contributing to European working group;
- The EAN has a role to play in managing/facilitating common projects related to apprenticeship policy/representation across Europe, undertaking independent research in this area.

5 Conclusions and suggestions for action

5.1 Apprentice representation structures

The mapping of apprentice representation structures undertaken in this study shows a varied landscape across Europe. Entities involved in apprentice representation range from apprentice, student or youth organisations, to trade unions, student unions, and a diversity of other entities.

Such diversity is partially explained by the duality inherent to apprenticeships which are between the worlds of work and education. In countries where the perception of apprentices as workers dominates, trade unions have a strong role in apprentice representation (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland). Some countries have structures strictly focusing on apprentices (France and UK) or VET learners (Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands). In many other countries (e.g. Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Norway), apprentice representativeness typically lies in student unions or associations or youth associations.

This study shows that apprentices' interests are better safeguarded through structures that represent apprentices directly or VET students overall. In wider-scope structures (i.e. representing a wider group of students, young people or professionals), apprentices are not necessarily well-represented, and the agendas are likely to be dominated by non-apprenticeship related topics. In structures which have consultation mechanisms in place to gather the views of apprentices, consultation is often not systematic and sometimes apprentices' views are only collected indirectly through the testimonies of employers or VET school staff.

Currently, only a limited number of European countries has in place structures that represent apprentices directly or VET students overall and cover most apprentices (AT, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, NL, NO, UK). Moving forward in apprentice representation in Europe will ultimately mean building similar structures in other European countries. However, this cannot be an immediate step for many countries. First, it will be key to expand the knowledge on apprentice participation in each country, understand and tackle the barriers to participation, and create or strengthen the mechanisms through which apprentices input into policy making.

Expanding knowledge on apprentice participation

It is important for countries to have a clear understanding of apprentice participation in existing structures, including those at national, regional and local level, as well as the structures at organisational level (at VET schools and companies).

Student unions or associations or youth associations are widespread across European countries. There is a need to understand to what extent these entities represent apprentices. Findings from this study suggest that there is little information on apprentices' level of participation in such structures, and there are some signs that apprentices may not be well represented. Collecting data on the level of participation of apprentices in such structures and the barriers they are facing to participate, are necessary steps towards more equal participation.

Similarly, it is unclear how well national, regional and local structures said to indirectly represent apprentices by means of consultation through wider bodies, actually fulfil this role. Education, VET or apprentice councils or similar entities are widespread across European countries and often envisage mechanisms to consult students or youth in general. It is important to analyse whether and how consultation is done in practice, to what extent are apprentices involved, and the barriers to their participation. Clarification is also needed on the mechanisms for apprentice participation in trade unions, employer organisations, VET provider associations, or any other relevant entities at national or regional level.

As for the organisational level, this study shows that even though student councils or similar structures are widespread across European schools, further research is needed to understand whether these structures are effectively implemented in most VET schools, and whether conditions are in place to ensure that apprentices participate at the same level as other groups (e.g. other learners in secondary schools). In the countries where there are representation structures at company level, it is key to clarify if all apprentices effectively have access to such structures and whether they participate at the same level as other groups (young workers or all employees) in the matters that concern them.

Suggestions for action

National level

To national and regional governments

- Analyse to what extent consultation bodies at national, regional or local level (e.g. education or VET councils) consult apprentices.
- Monitor if participation methods established by Law (e.g. in countries where representation is rooted in legislation such as Denmark and the Netherlands) are being adequately implemented at school or company level, and whether apprentices participate at the same level as other groups.
- Gather knowledge on the barriers to apprentice participation at the different levels.

To organisations

- To national or regional student associations and unions, and youth organisations:
 - Collect data on the level of participation of apprentices.
 - Gather knowledge on the barriers to apprentice participation.
- To trade unions:
 - Analyse if all apprentices effectively have access to representation structures and whether they participate at the same level as other groups.

- Gather knowledge on the barriers to apprentice participation.
- To VET providers and companies:
 - Reflect on the representation structures available for apprentices and analyse their level of participation.
 - Gather knowledge on the barriers to apprentice participation.
- To consultation bodies, associations of VET schools, and other organisation which consult apprentices:
 - Analyse to what extent apprentices are consulted and the mechanisms used (e.g. whether their views are collected directly or through others).
 - Gather knowledge on the barriers detected when consulting apprentices.

EU level

- Conduct further research on the barriers to apprentice participation and youth participation in Europe.
- Report the results of the study to the EAfA, and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (ACVT) and reflect on further developments regarding representation structures.

Overcoming the barriers

Barriers to participation vary across countries and types of representation structures. These include low level development of the apprenticeships system and thus low participation of apprenticeships; lack of tradition of apprentice/youth representation in the country; legal requirements related to apprentices' age or status; difficulty in engaging apprentices, and; lack of support and capacity-building for apprentice representation from relevant stakeholders.

In some countries, overcoming obstacles may involve making changes to legislation to reinforce and facilitate greater opportunities for apprentice representation (e.g. to allow apprentices to join trade unions). In most countries it will require awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

Awareness-raising efforts need to target national/regional policy makers and stakeholders as well as apprentices. The EU should play a role in getting apprentice participation on the political agenda across European countries. National and regional authorities should foster the creation of national or regional representation structures by raising awareness of the potential benefits of such structures among stakeholders and apprentices. For instance, they can organise events to promote the benefits of apprentice representation or create tools to facilitate exchanges between apprentices.

National and regional authorities should also help create the conditions that enable the development of representation structures at the organisational level which can ultimately become the basis of regional or national structures. The type of measures to promote representation at the organisational level need to be tailored to the situation in each country and can include, for instance: capacity-building activities for VET staff or apprentices, the allocation of time to participation activities in apprentice and staff schedules, the creation of sections for apprentices within student representation structures, or the provision of financial incentives to school-level structures.

In countries where apprentices are considered employees, unions have a key role in promoting apprentice participation. Unions should ensure that apprentices participate at the same level as other groups (young workers or all employees) in the matters that concern them and facilitate that apprentices from companies where there are no

representation structures can be represented through higher level structures (e.g. regional).

National or regional student associations and unions should promote a balanced participation of apprentices and other students or youth groups, for instance, by organising information campaigns or other awareness raising activities targeting apprentices or creating sections for apprentices. Companies and VET providers, which are in direct contact with apprentices, should provide them with information on representation structures and support their participation.

Any organisations that consult apprentices as part of their activities (consultation bodies, social partners, VET provider associations, or other) should make sure that consultation is applied systematically, that the consultation methods used are clear to apprentices and other stakeholders, and that apprentices' views are collected directly and not (only) through third parties.

Suggestions for action

National level

To national and regional governments

- Organise awareness raising activities for apprentices and stakeholders (e.g. events and tools to promote exchanges between apprentices).
- Provide funding to representation structures for information and awareness raising activities targeting apprentices.
- Strengthen apprentice representation structures in VET providers (e.g. by promoting capacity-building activities for teachers, in-company trainers or apprentices).
- Where apprentice participation is limited by Law, amend legislation to make sure that it foresees mechanisms for apprentice participation.

To organisations

- To national or regional student associations and unions, and youth organisations:
 - Organise awareness raising activities targeting apprentices.
 - Envisage other measures to promote a balanced participation of apprentices and other students or youth groups (e.g. creation of sections for apprentices).
- To trade unions:
 - Implement measures to ensure that apprentices participate at the same level as other groups (young workers or all employees).
 - Implement measures to ensure that all apprentices have access to representation structures
- To VET providers and companies:
 - Inform apprentices about representation structures.
 - Support apprentice participation in representation structures.
- To consultation bodies, associations of VET schools, and other organisations which consult apprentices:
 - Apply consultation systematically.
 - Collect feedback directly from apprentices.

EU level

- Raise awareness of the benefits of apprentice representation among national and European policy makers and stakeholders.
- Further disseminate EU actions to encourage active citizenship and support youth organisations to reach out to a diverse group of young people, including apprentices.

Ensuring that apprentices' voices have an impact on the governance of apprenticeships and other policies impacting on young apprentices

Having representation structures in place at the national, regional and local level is a key step to strengthen apprentice participation. As part of the governance of apprenticeships, national and regional authorities need to create mechanisms for apprentices to be systematically represented in decision-making. For instance, apprentice representatives could participate in social dialogue, sectoral bodies, or national/regional consultation bodies for apprenticeships, VET, education or national youth policies, in particular through the National Youth Councils.

Clarity on how apprentice representatives will input into decision making processes (e.g. in what instances they will be heard, with what frequency, etc.) will in its turn motivate the development of representation structures.

Survey outcomes can be a useful source for policy makers and school leaders to inform policy developments related to apprentice representation. This is especially useful in countries where apprentice representation is not yet developed and contributes to quality assurance at system more generally. It also signals to apprentices that their voices are being taken seriously.

Suggestions for action

National level

To national and regional governments

- Clearly define the mechanisms through which apprentice representatives will input into decision making processes on the governance of apprenticeships and other policies impacting on young apprentices.
- Consider the use of surveys to gain the views of apprentices/VET students on their learning experience. The outcomes of such surveys can contribute to quality apprenticeships.

EU level

- Consider ways to facilitate cross-country collaboration, e.g. through networking and mutual learning activities on apprentice representation, including through the Apprenticeships Support Services.

5.2 The EAN: current state of play and suggestions for future development

The overall view from key informant interviews on the role of the EAN, its progress to date, added value and future potential can be reported as highly positive. The EAN is regarded for its key contribution to the EAfA, in addition to the seven priorities of the EAN and the European Youth Forum's Position on Quality Apprenticeships. It is perceived as a dynamic network, serving as an ambassador for apprentice representation and for apprenticeships in general. EAN activities and apprentices' voluntary contribution are commended.

Evidence from the study indicates that there is a high level of support for the EAN to continue its efforts in influencing and contributing to EU priorities on apprenticeship policy. There is clear consensus for the role for the EAN as:

- An umbrella organisation of elected/nominated apprentice representatives from all European countries;
- An entity with a dual role of representing apprentices at European level and contributing to youth related policies;
- A critical partner to the European Commission, OBESSU and EYF;
- A centre of expertise with potential to be part of a wider approach to developing the representation of VET learners more broadly.

In going forward, the EAN would need to be based on stronger governance arrangements than those currently in place and establish clear structures for dialogue with Member States and EU-level partners. The suggestions for action set out below present how the EAN can strengthen its role as a critical actor in the European apprenticeship and youth policy arena and support apprentice representation across European countries. Many of them refer to activities with a financial impact, therefore their feasibility and implementation depend on the available financial resources.

Providing a role for the EAN to support the development of apprentice representation structures by sharing of best practice and peer learning

A consensus amongst the EAN interviewees is a role for the **EAN supporting the development of apprentice representation structures at national level**. At national level, a key message emerging from the national informants is that there is a need to focus on developing national structures before looking towards Europe. In many countries, the EAN can have an important role in supporting the development of such national structures. In countries where apprentice representation is guaranteed by legislation and effectively in practice, the added value of EAN in influencing the development of apprentice representation structures is likely to be limited. Given the diversity of apprenticeships across Europe and the fact that countries are at different stages of developing representation structures, this study reveals an appetite for the EAN to **contribute to the development of 'guidelines'** that include **good practice examples** related to apprenticeship policy and apprentice representation. On the one hand, the study findings highlight a role for the EAN in taking relevant European policy related to apprenticeships and youth (for example), applying it to the priorities of the EAN, and then producing a set of guidelines. These guidelines could be distributed to a range of entities involved in apprenticeships and serve as a method of translating European policy developments at national level. It could also help creating awareness of EU policies and their implementation among young apprentices (e.g. possibilities to contribute to the Youth Dialogue process).

The potential role for the EAN in producing guidelines on specific topics and good practice examples has also been identified. Specific topics emerging from the research include:

- Addressing intergeneration issues related to apprenticeships;
- Addressing inequalities in apprenticeships;
- Apprenticeships to support the integration of migrant learners into the labour market;
- Promoting the mobility of apprentices.

Strengthening links with other apprentices networks such as the 'EuroApprentices' and to a certain extent the 'Erasmus Student Network'⁷⁴ could be beneficial for the work of

⁷⁴ <https://www.esn.org/>

the EAN. Efforts could be made to coordinate activities undertaken by the different networks to avoid duplication of work.

A key message from the research is that the EAN should be a place that allows for the exchange of ideas and good practice related to apprenticeships. This can be supported by a range of **peer learning** activities such as study visits, peer reviews, contributing to relevant European/national working groups, managing/facilitating European projects related to apprentice representation and undertaking comparative research into aspects of apprenticeship quality. In going forward, additional capacity (in terms of finance, expertise and manpower) is needed to enable the EAN to undertake additional activities over and above what is currently in place.

Suggestions for action

European Apprentices Network level

- Coordinate with the European Commission, OBESSU, EYF, Euro Apprentices to jointly develop activities and materials to support the development of apprentice representation structures in European countries.

National level

- Organise awareness raising activities for apprentices and stakeholders (e.g. events and tools to promote exchanges between apprentices) to raise the profile of the EAN.
- Consult the 68 entities involved in apprentice representation in European countries (as identified through this study) to better identify their needs for EAN contribution to guidelines, peer learning activities, research activities.

EU level

- Raise awareness of the EAN among European and national policy makers and stakeholders, for instance by further involving EAN in relevant mutual learning and other activities.
- Consider ways to facilitate cross-country collaboration and to support EAN's activities among stakeholders in European countries.
- Explore synergies and more systemic links to other networks, e.g. through the Apprenticeship Support Services.

Raising the profile of the EAN at European and national levels

This study explored the type of communication channels and tools used to communicate the role of the EAN to relevant bodies (at different levels) and to apprentices. To support the overall improvement of the EAN's communication channels, the study shows that whilst internal communication channels (e.g. amongst EAN members) are reported to be working well, **greater efforts are needed to promote the role of the EAN at European and national levels**. Raising awareness of the EAN through cross-country collaboration, networking and mutual learning activities on apprentice representation may go some way to raising the issue of apprentice representation and the need to ensure the voice of apprentices is included in decision-making processes.

Existing **EAN members should continue efforts to promote the EAN** and its activities through their own networks and contacts at national level. Strengthen links with other apprenticeship networks such as the 'Euro Apprentices' can also be used to promote the role of the EAN at European and national levels. As discussed in more detail below, an 'EAN Alumni' could also be used to promote the role of the EAN at national levels.

Additional **financial resources** and capacity for the EAN to take ownership of external communication efforts are considered desirable in this respect.

Suggestions for action

European Apprentices Network level

- Produce communication activities to raise the profile of the EAN. This should include approaches to raise the profile of the EAN at European and national level through varied communication approaches (e.g. campaigns and social media), as well as building bridges with existing networks.

EU level

- Consider ways to support the EAN for communication activities to increase reach out to apprentices and stakeholders at the European and national levels.

Strengthening the overall governance of the EAN

Findings from this study emphasise the need for a stronger governance structure of the EAN. A key message from the EAN interviewees is the **need for a dedicated secretariat** with a principal role to play – amongst others – in organising EAN meetings, managing EAN membership, coordinating EAN communication efforts, participating in relevant events and meetings at EU and/or national levels (in the absence of a national EAN representative), undertaking research into aspects of apprenticeship quality and organising peer learning activities. A potential proposal would need to outline detailed resource requirements in terms of start-up costs and thereafter annual running costs over a three-year period, cost requirements in terms of personnel (e.g. full time / part time requirement) and activities to be undertaken.

This study has also emphasised the need for the **EAN to operate under the remit of some form of 'mandate'**. During the study, proposals were put forward for a 'formal mandate' though there was no clear consensus on what this might look like. Clarification on how a prospective EAN mandate is devised and who assumes primary ownership of it is required.

Related to the overall governance of the EAN, some proposals were put forward to modify the existing governance arrangements – for example **establish an 'EAN board' alongside a broader membership network**. An extended network could include employers' associations, NGOs and youth organisations so ensure a more diversified base effective outreach.

In terms of the status of the EAN, conflicting views were put forward. On the one hand there is a push for the **EAN to hold a similar status to other EU stakeholders such as OBESSU and the EYF**, whilst on the other hand, there is a view the EAN should not be a political body and should maintain a role in raising awareness and sharing of best practice.

Suggestions for action

European Apprentices Network level

- Propose options to reinforce the EAN, including through the establishment of a dedicated secretariat.
- Gain a clearer understanding / consensus on what the EAN should cover and who assumes overall responsibility for it, as well as the duration of the members' mandate.

- Gain a deeper understanding of how other related networks are structured in terms of dedicated board / extended membership network.
- Consult with the European Commission to gain a clearer understanding of what it might mean to establish an 'extended network' of EAN.

EU level

- Consider ways to support a dedicated secretariat and the existing (and potential future) EAN activities (for instance, through Erasmus+ and the Apprenticeship Support Services).

Reviewing the EAN membership and selection procedure

This study highlights the need to review the existing EAN membership and selection procedure. Whilst there was no strong opinion to remove the current age cap of 30 years of age, some EAN interviewees felt the age range of EAN members should be extended to be representative of adult apprentices (a view also shared by some national informants).

Regarding the selection procedure, the study findings also emphasises the need to reinforce the existing selection process to ensure a more balanced composition of members in terms of current/former 'apprentices', geographical origin (with one apprentice representative from each Member State, EU candidate and EFTA country), gender balance, and representatives from higher VET and those from youth organisations. A requirement for EAN members to be suitably experienced in apprenticeship policy and/or practice should also be incorporated into the selection procedure.

A clear message from the research is that the EAN is currently limited in its potential to make an impact at European or national level without 'elected' apprentice representation structures being in place at national level. A view from all interviewee types is that representatives to the EAN should be elected members – a model currently in place in some countries (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands) but not in the context of the EAN. There is potential to learn from countries with established apprentice representation structures in place – particularly in relation to democratic representation models whereby individuals are elected to representation structures.

Suggestions for action

European Apprentices Network level

- Gain a better understanding of how individuals are elected to apprentice representation structures

National level

- Stimulate cooperation between structures at national and regional level and the EAN, e.g through commitments from employers to facilitate participation of apprentices in EAN meetings/activities.

EU level

- Review the EAN membership and selection procedure ensuring a balanced composition of members (as described above).

Enhancing the working methods of the EAN

EAN meetings are currently linked to the EAfA meeting schedule. This study has identified that the frequency of the EAfA meetings and time available for EAN members to meet is limited and restricts the added value of the EAN. An extended / more flexible timeframe for EAN members to meet during EAfA events could help address this. Additional activities alongside EAfA meetings should also be undertaken and facilitated by improved online communication tools. It should however be borne in mind that EAN members participate on a voluntary basis and therefore may not be able to consistently dedicate time in between EAfA/EAN meetings due to their own working commitments. Greater efforts should be made to engage EAN members who are not able to attend EAN meetings in person by using alternative means (e.g. written contributions, tele-conferencing).

The study also identifies the need for EAN members to participate in training and development to enable them to undertake their role and enhance the role of the EAN as a centre of expertise. This includes training related to organisational skills, public speaking, knowledge and understanding of European policies related to apprenticeships. EAN members responsible for organising and chairing EAN meetings should ensure meetings are carefully structured to fully capitalise on the knowledge and expertise of attending members. This study has identified support for EAN members to participate in peer learning activities to learn more about apprentice representation structures. A study visit in a country of an existing EAN member (as a starting point) is one suggestion.

This study has also highlighted some difficulty experienced in ensuring consistent involvement from EAN members and retaining knowledge and expertise within the network. This is due to a high turnover of representatives as members are typically in a transition period and likely to move on in their education and employment pathways. Introducing an 'EAN alumni' has been proposed as a way of retaining the knowledge and expertise of the EAN beyond the timeframe of the members' mandate.

Suggestions for action

EU level

- Consider ways to support capacity-building activities for EAN members, including training opportunities (for instance, through Erasmus+ and the Apprenticeship Support Services).
- Reflect on setting-up an 'EAN Alumni' to retain expertise of former EAN members and promote the role of the EAN.

To conclude, the fact that the EAN is in place signals a clear message that the voice of the apprentice and their contribution to European and national debates and decision-making processes is taken seriously in policy terms. As expressed by one interviewee, *'the EAN is now in place ... we should keep it going, feed it and help it grow.'*

It is acknowledged that the EAN is still a relatively young network and as such needs time to evolve and add value further in relation to apprenticeship policy both at European and national levels. Information gathered through the key informant interviews at national level suggests there is definite demand for the EAN to contribute to the development of apprentice representation structures – especially in countries where no such structures exist, though less so in countries where representation is guaranteed by legislation and effectively in practice.

A clear role of the EAN is seen in sharing best practice, whereby peer learning activities are strongly emphasised as one such mechanisms to have an impact on the development of apprentice representation structures across Europe by building

expertise and capacity as a highly valued centre of expertise. This is even more relevant as the ACVT opinion on the future of vocational education and training post 2020 states that "*Governance in VET is expected to move towards a shared system with the participation of main stakeholders and implemented at national, regional, local, institutional and sector level. The involvement of social partners as well as stakeholders such as providers and VET learners in the development, implementation and governance of VET policies should be further strengthened*".

ANNEXES

Attached as separate files:

- Annex 1: Mapping table of apprentice representation structures
- Annex 2: List of key informant interviews at national level
- Annex 3: Country factsheets
- Annex 4: Case studies

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