**Integrated Strategy Initiative for Strengthening the supply of APPrenticeships in TEXtile sector**

**TEXAPP**

**NATIONAL REPORT**

***BULGARIA***

**Background:**

This report has the objective to analyze and summarize the main findings reached through a survey among 31 Bulgarian textile&clothing companies conducted in the months of March and April 2017.

The survey included questions related to the companies’ knowledge, experience and needs in regard to professional practices and apprenticeships, as well as some general questions about the companies’ economic situation and HR.

**Chapter 1: General Characteristics**

**Question 2 (Years of operation of companies)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Years of operations** | | | |
| **0-1** | **1-10** | **10-30** | **30+** |
|  | 5 | 24 | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 0% | 16% | 77% | 6% |

* The majority of the respondents (77%) are companies which have been existing between 10 and 30 years. This is in line with the fact that most companies in the Bulgarian T&C industry were founded after the end of the Cold War along with the liberalization of the country’s economy.
* 83% of all companies in the survey have 10+ years of operation, meaning that they have enough business experience

**Question 4 (Number of employees)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size** | | | |
| **Micro  (1-9)** | **Small  (10-49)** | **Medium  (50-249)** | **Big  (250+)** |
| **1** | **13** | **11** | **6** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 3% | 42% | 35% | 19% |

* The surveyed companies (31) are representative of the Bulgarian T&C industry which is dominated by small and medium enterprises; 77% of the respondents are namely SMEs.
* Nevertheless, there is also a significant share of large enterprises among the surveyed companies (19%).
* Micro enterprises are mostly companies not directly engaged with industrial production but rather operating as agents or wholesalers. Therefore they are not really representative of the general T&C industry.
* 30 of the respondents are clothing companies, and only 1 company is from the textile sector. This corresponds to the fact that most companies (more than 90%) in the industry are from the clothing subsector.

**Question 7 (Evolution of companies’ turnover over the past 5 years)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **7. Over the past 5 years, has company turnover** | | | | |
| Reduced | Stayed the same | Grown | TOTAL |  |
| 6 | 7 | 18 | 31 |  |

* The majority of companies indicate growth in their turnover for the last 5 years, while only 6 say that their turnover reduced during this period.
* The answers correspond to the fact that the Bulgarian T&C industry has had constant growth in terms of exports in the post-crisis period, whereas almost all companies are export-oriented.
* The general turnover increase was supported by the comeback of many fashion brands from China back to Europe as well as by the insecure political situation in major clothing exporting countries such as Ukraine, Turkey, Tun

**Question 8 (Over the next 5 years, do you expect turnover to (evolution))**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **8. Over the next 5 years, do you expect turnover to** | | | | | |
| Reduce | Stayed the same | Grow | TOTAL |  |  |
| 4 | 10 | 17 | 31 |  |  |

* Also positive are the expectations for the next 5 years, as the majority of respondents say they expect increase of their turnover, while only 4 companies expect their turnover to drop.
* This finding can be explained through the on-going increasing demand for production capacities in Bulgaria by western European brands, respectively through the established new partnerships by Bulgarian companies.
* A major hurdle in the realization of these expectations could be the lack of enough workforce as the number of employees in the Bulgarian industry (namely clothing subsector) has been constantly decreasing over the last years.

**Question 13 (Evolution of the workforce over the last 5 years)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **13. Over the past year has the workforce** | | | | |
| a.      Decreased significantly (>5%) | b.      Decreased slightly (<5%) | c.      Stayed the same | d.      Increased slightly (<5%) | e.      Increased significantly (>5%) |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 1 |

* The answers relating to the evolution of workforce cannot lead to a simple conclusion as they are almost evenly distributed between increase and decrease of personnel.
* However, the official statistics show that the T&C industry has lost nearly 1/3 of its workforce since the global economic crisis.
* The lower percentage of the companies within the survey claiming to have lost employees can be explained through the fact that they are some of the best-performing companies in Bulgaria and have not been so severely influenced by the negative general trend in the country’s T&C industry.

**Question 11 (What proportion of the workforce is)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What proportion of the workforce is** | | | | | |
| **Unskilled** | **Semi-skilled** | **Office staff** | **Middle management** | **Top management** | **Other** |
| 18% | 66% | 8% | 4% | 1% | 3% |

* The structure of the workforce according to the survey is typical for the T&C industry, i.e. large part of the employees are semi-skilled (66%) and unskilled (18%) workers.
* This means that most of the workforce is engaged in operations requiring no special qualification, and companies provide some basic training after recruitment.
* However, the responses confirm the need for vocational training among production employees.

**Question 12 (What qualifications does the workforce hold)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What qualifications does the workforce hold** | | | | | |
| **University degree** | **Tertiary education (non-university degree)** | **High school graduation** | **Vocational qualifications** | **Primary education** | **None** |
| 10% | 1% | 56% | 12% | 21% | 1% |

* The survey confirms the well-known fact that most of the people employed in the T&C industry have no higher education degree.
* Most of the workers in the surveyed companies have graduated from high schools.
* The university graduates relate mostly to the top management and office administration.
* Relatively low is the percentage of people having vocational qualification in any field – only 12%. It needs to be noted that this number does not include vocational qualification only in the T&C industry, but in any field, which means that the percentage of workers having been trained particularly for the T&C industry is much lower.
* The responses show the obvious need for training of workers after recruitment based on the fact that very few of them have some received in advance some preliminary qualification related to their job.

**Question 14 (Do you plan to increase your headcount in the next year?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do you plan to increase your headcount in the next year?** | |
| YES | NO |
| 21 | 10 |
|  |  |
| 68% | 32% |

* Based on the growing demand for production capacities in Bulgaria, nearly 2/3 of the 31 respondents say they plan to increase their headcount in the next year.
* This again shows the need for finding people with adequate qualification.
* As stated above, however, these plans can be seriously impeded by the heavy loss of manpower suffered by the T&C industry due to the strong competition from other sectors with higher added value (such as automotive, for instance).

**Question 15 (Do you have problems recruiting staff?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do you have problems recruiting staff?** | |
| YES | NO |
| 29 | 2 |
|  |  |
| 94% | 6% |

* The responses indicate unambiguously that almost the entire industry is facing trouble with finding workforce. This fact has been actually the major problem for the T&C industry for several years already.
* The main reasons for this are the high level of emigration to western European countries, the competition from other higher-income sectors on the labour market, and the low attractiveness of the industry among young people.
* This problem will apparently be the greatest challenge for the T&C industry in the coming years and its survival will be directly linked to its solving.

**Question 16 (What sources do you use for recruiting?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What sources do you use for recruiting?** | | | | | | |  |  |
| Job advertising | Local employment centres | Employment agencies | External service providers (HR consulting, headhunter, etc.) | Cooperation with schools/colleges/universities | Internal advertising | Other | **TOTAL COMPANIES** | |
| 29 | 21 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 0 | **31** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 94% | 68% | 13% | 10% | 19% | 29% | 0% |  |  |

* The most preferred methods of recruiting are job advertising (mainly in local media) and through local employment centres (the latter refer to the local bureaus of the National employment agency).
* This can be explained by the fact that most companies are located in small and medium-sized cities where the employer is relatively well-known among the population.
* Still few companies rely on cooperation with schools/colleges/universities. This problem is double-sided because companies claim that the academic institutions cannot provide them with people willing to work in industrial companies. This hinders the deeper cooperation between both sides.

**Chapter 2: Demographics about the company and HR**

**Question 9 (Does the company have a Training/HR strategy?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Training/HR strategy** | | |
| **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| **12** | **19** |  |
| 39% | 61% |  |

* A worrying fact is that almost two thirds of the 31 companies in the survey respond that they have no Training or HR strategy.
* Partly, this could be explained through the low level of business culture among companies. Indicative is the fact that the larger companies have responded with “Yes” while the smaller ones mostly answer with “No”. It is to presume that smaller companies do not have the administrative and financial capacity to deal with this topic.
* Also, most of the companies having a Training/HR strategy have stated that their turnover has grown in the last 5 years, so here we find a correlation between the overall performance of companies and the availability of a Training/HR strategy.

**Question 10 (Does the company operate Quality standards?)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Does the company operate Quality standards?** | | | |
| **Yes** | | | **No** |
| **23** | | | **8** |
| 74% | | | 26% |
|  | | |  |
|  | | |  |
| **Type of Quality standards** | | | | | |
| **ISO** | **Internal Standard** | **Customer/Sector Standard** | | | **Other** |
| 17 | 9 | 10 | | | 0 |
| 55% | 29% | 32% | | | 0% |

* Nearly three quarters of the respondents claim that they operate quality standards within their businesses. This is logical in view of the fact that almost all of them are export oriented.
* More than half have an ISO standardization which is the most common standard used at national level.
* Internal standards and customer/sectorial standards are both operated by nearly 1/3 of the companies surveyed.

**Question 17 (Do you have an internal training capacity?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Availability of internal training capacity** | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| 19 | 12 |
| 61% | 39% |

* 61% of the respondents answer that they have internal training capacity.
* The contents of this response has, however, to be interpreted more broadly since the different companies put different meaning in this term. It is to assume that a large portion of the companies mean by this the initial training of personnel after recruitment.
* It is less likely that the “Yes” respondents have a functioning apprenticeship programme or any other kind of a structured system to for vocational training.

**Question 18 (Do you use external training providers?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Usage of external training providers** | |
| **Yes** | **No** |
| 20 | 11 |
| 65% | 35% |

* 2/3 of the surveyed companies state that they use external training providers.
* This means that they organize some short trainings for their employees led by external consultants, rather than a systematic approach or a permanent training programme.
* Generally, the mentioned trainings are ad hoc events.

**Chapter 3: Apprenticeship characterization**

**Question 19 (Does your organisation know about apprenticeships?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Does your organisation know about apprenticeships?** | | |
| **Yes, a lot** | **Yes, a little** | **No** |
| 1 | 16 | 14 |

* Most companies have only limited knowledge on apprenticeships, which is proven by the given answers. At the same time, almost half of them answer that they have no knowledge on the topic at all.
* This situation is not a surprise bearing in mind the fact that the topic of apprenticeships and dual vocational education is comparatively new for the Bulgarian economy.
* The responses to these questions confirm the above-mentioned assumption that the trainings (both internal and external) in the companies have little to do with real apprenticeship schemes.
* It can be concluded that still a lot has to be done to promote vocational training and apprenticeships among both businesses and society.

**Question 20 (Where do you source information on apprenticeships?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sources of information on apprenticeships** | | | | | | |
| **Governmental source** | **Mass media** | **College** | **Training organiser** | **Internet** | **Conference** | **Other** |
| 13 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 1 |

* Almost half companies say to receive information on apprenticeships from governmental sources.
* Other sources are also used, so one can say that there are enough channels that companies can get information from.
* However, it is doubtful to what extent the available information is enough in terms of quantity and quality, bearing in mind that most companies claim that they have either little or no information on apprenticeships.

**Question 21 (Does your company have experience of using apprenticeships?)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Experience in apprenticeships** | | |
| **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| 6 | 25 | 0 |

* The responses to this question prove the conclusion about the limited knowledge and use of apprenticeships among the T&C industry, as only 6 out of 31 companies claim to have experience in this area.
* This fact is supported by the little available information and the lost traditions regarding apprenticeships.
* In addition, the problem is deepened by the lack of young people willing to become apprentices and the general ignorance of society in the last 3 decades.

**Question 22 (How likely are you to recruit an apprentice over the next 2 years?)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **How likely are you to recruit an apprentice over the next 2 years** | | | |
| Likely | Unlikely | Very likely | Very unlikely |
| 7 | 6 | 12 | 6 |

* 12 out of 31 companies respond it is very likely that they recruit apprentices in the next 2 years. Other 7 companies say it is likely.
* This implies the growing need for vocational trainings as the number of companies planning to engage in this topic is much higher than those that currently have experience in it.
* The answers also show the rising awareness among companies about the importance of apprenticeships for their strategic development.
* Nevertheless, still a high number of companies respond that they don’t plan to recruit apprentices, which means that not the whole industry in convinced in the practicability of apprenticeships.

**Question 23 (If “yes”, which of the following areas might you recruit in?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Which of the following areas might you recruit in an apprentice** | | | | | | |
| Business Administration | Technical | Customer service | Manufacturing | Marketing | Finance | Other |
| 6 | 10 | 4 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 0 |

* Expectedly, most common apprenticeship areas are Manufacturing and Technical training. These are the fields in which most companies face recruiting problems.
* The other areas (finance, marketing, customer service, business administration) are also indicated, which means that actually companies are interested to train people in a broader spectrum of fields.
* In general, however, the Manufacturing and Technical fields can be considered as the most important.

**Question 24 (Have you already participated in apprenticeship or plan recruiting an apprentice?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Have you already participated in apprenticeship or plan recruiting an apprentice** | |
| Yes | No |
| 12 | 19 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reason for participation | **Neutral** | **Relevant** | **Very relevant** | **Irrelevant** | **Very irrelevant** |
| Finding a source for affordable labour | 4 | 2 | 6 |  |  |
| Difficulty finding employee with relevant skills and education | 1 | 3 | 8 |  |  |
| To train the company’s future workforce | 2 | 5 | 5 |  |  |
| To replace retiring employees | 5 | 3 | 4 |  |  |
| The support provided by other agencies | 10 | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| Other reasons | 11 |  | 1 |  |  |

* Still most companies respond they haven’t participated or don’t plan to recruit apprentices. Yet, their number is higher than the number of those that have responded to have knowledge on apprenticeships.
* A relatively low number of companies gave answers as to what their reasons to participate are.
* The most relevant reasons to participate are:
  + To train the company’s future workforce;
  + Difficulty finding employee with relevant skills and education;
  + Finding a source for affordable labour;

**Question 25 (To what extend you agree to the following statements, in relation to apprenticeships?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| To what extent you agree to the following statements, in relation to apprenticeships | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** |
| The rules applying to apprenticeships are easy to understand | 13 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 |
| The relevant authority provides me with the necessary information | 11 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 5 |
| The regulations are difficult to apply | 19 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| The administration workload is acceptable | 17 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 2 |
| The practical training time spent at the company is sufficient | 16 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 0 |

* The most common answer to the sub-questions here is Neutral. This implies the still low knowledge and awareness among companies on the topic of apprenticeships.
* Most companies feel unconfident to respond to the questions since they lack the necessary competence on the matter.
* Therefore it is hard to make concrete conclusions on the general attitude to the given statements.

**Question 26 (What are the main challenges that you foresee with apprenticeships?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the main challenges that you foresee with apprenticeships?** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Selecting / finding the right person | Managing the apprentice | Developing the training programme | Finding them suitable work to do | | Right attitude for work (from the apprentice) | | Poor starting knowledge (of the apprentice) | Cost | Other | No challenges | Will not be taking on an apprentice |
| 18 | 12 | 15 | 2 | 9 | | 14 | | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
|  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  |  |  |  |
| 56% | 38% | 47% | 6% | 28% | | 44% | | 19% | 0% | 0% | 19% |

* The biggest challenges in regard to apprenticeships among the surveyed companies are:
  + Selecting/finding the right person;
  + Managing the apprentice;
  + Developing the training programme;
  + Poor starting knowledge of the apprentice;
* The costs have been indicated as a challenge by only 19% of the respondents.
* Other 19% claim that they will not take apprentices at all.

**Question 27 (What help would be useful when recruiting an apprentice?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What help would be useful when recruiting an apprentice?** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Advertising the vacancy | Identifying the person | Arranging interviews | | Conducting interviews | Supporting development of the training programme | | Providing links to schools | | Supporting administration | | Other | | Will not be taking on an apprentice | | |
| 2 | 16 | 0 | 3 | | | 17 | | 7 | | 20 | | 0 | | 7 |
|  |  |  |  | | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |
| 6% | 52% | 0% | 10% | | | 55% | | 23% | | 65% | | 0% | | 23% |

* As to the needed support in recruiting, the biggest problems reported in the survey are:
  + Supporting the administration;
  + Supporting development of the training programme;
  + Identifying the right person;
* The support that only few companies need is in relation to interviews and links to schools.
* 7 out of 31 companies state they will not take on apprentices at all.

**Chapter 4: Familiarizing with Apprenticeship**

**Question 28 (Are you familiar with the financing support you are eligible for when employing an apprentice?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Are you familiar with the financing support you are eligible for when employing an apprentice?** | |
| YES | NO |
| 4 | 27 |

* Only 4 companies respond that they are familiar with the financial support for apprenticeships. However, no real financial incentives have been transposed into the Bulgarian legislation in terms of apprentices, since the topic is still being discussed at national level. It is questionable what knowledge the companies could actually possess on the topic.
* Moreover, it is a fact that the state does too little to promote apprenticeships/dual vocational training among the industry, although it exists as part of the educational legislation.

**Question 29 (Do you have past experience with apprentices?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do you have past experience with apprentices** | |
| YES | NO |
| 5 | 26 |

* Only 5 companies claim to have experience with apprentices. The number is even less than the number of companies which have answered positively on Question 24.
* This proves the current very low level of involvement of companies in the Bulgarian T&C industry in apprenticeship schemes.
* It also confirms the urgent need for action from the side of the institutions to promote vocational training.

**Question 34 (If you decided NOT to recruit an apprentice, what were your main reasons for doing so?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If you decided NOT to recruit an apprentice, what were your main reasons for doing so? | **Neutral** | **Relevant** | **Very relevant** | **Irrelevant** | **Very irrelevant** |
| Administration is complicated | 3 |  | 3 |  |  |
| Our experience with students are bad | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| The legislation background of apprenticeship is changing too often | 2 | 2 | 1 |  |  |
| Lack of knowledge of how to deliver an apprenticeship programme | 1 | 2 | 1 |  | 1 |
| The size of our company is too small for apprenticeship | 3 |  | 1 |  | 1 |
| The premises of our company are inappropriate for hosting training | 3 | 1 |  | 1 |  |
| Lack of trainer capacity | 2 |  | 2 |  | 1 |
| Lack of supervisor capacity | 2 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |
| Lack of work to be offered to apprentice | 3 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Lack of suitable young people / applicants | 2 |  | 3 |  |  |
| Lack of vocational training relevant for the company profile | 1 |  | 4 |  |  |
| Attitude of the students to work is not supportive | 1 |  | 4 |  |  |
| Too costly compared to the benefits it brings | 2 | 2 | 1 |  |  |
| Lack of financial means of the company | 3 | 1 |  |  | 1 |
| Other | 4 | 1 |  |  |  |
| \* Only 5 enterprises answered this question |  |  |  |  |  |

* Very few companies responded to this question, which is in line with the fact that the level of involvement is very low.
* Among the companies that have answered, the most relevant reasons for non-recruiting are the problems with young people’s interest and attitude, as well as the inadequacy of the vocational training towards company’s needs.
* Still, the most common answer is “Neutral” which confirms the general unawareness of companies to the topic.

**Question 35 (Out of the following, is there any training that you need but are not able to source locally?)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Out of the following, is there any training that you need but are not able to source locally?** | | | | | |
| **Business skills** | **Operations / process training** | **Management skills** | **Health and Safety skills** | **Finance skills** | **Other** |
| 9 | 20 | 12 | 4 | 12 | 1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| \*Others: 1 response: Technologists and pattern-makers |  |  |  |  |

* The survey confirms the well-known fact that companies desperately need trained people for operations and processes. 2/3 of respondents say they need training in this area.
* The other skills are also represented, yet a smaller number of companies claim to have needs related to them.
* Indicative is the fact that all companies responded to this question, which means they all have need for training in at least one area.

**Chapter 5: Apprenticeship in organisation & impact of apprenticeship**

Since only 2 companies responded to the questions included in this chapter, it is impossible to make any conclusion. The low participation to these questions can be explained through the already mentioned low involvement of companies in apprentices and the different interpretation of the term. As presumed, many companies do not put long-term approach in the term “apprenticeship” but rather a short (several weeks) training. One can assume that only few companies (if any) have been involved in real apprenticeship schemes, thus the low number of respondents to the questions regarding impact of apprenticeships.

All this leads to the conclusion that a lot needs to be done in order to better inform the companies about the real contents of an apprenticeship scheme and that it should be seen as a long-term investment.

**Chapter 6: Follow-up**

**Question 36 (Would you like to receive further information on the TEXAPP project and its results?)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 29. Would you like to receive further information on the TEXAPP project and its results? |
|  |  |
| YES | 22 |
| NO | 9 |
| N/A | 0 |
| Blank | 0 |
|  | 31 |

**Conclusion**

The conducted survey outlines the some general facts that can be extracted about the T&C (particularly Clothing) industry in Bulgaria and the usage of apprenticeships in it:

* The industry has been experiencing growth in terms of turnover as well as increased demand;
* Also, the expectations of the industry for the middle term are also positive, hence the need to recruit new staff – something that is problematic for almost every company.
* Finding new workers is currently the major issue in the industry; however apprenticeships have not yet been perceived as an important way to ensure workforce in the long-term, as only very few companies have been involved in apprenticeship schemes and have real experience with this;
* The actual level of qualification of workers is low, as most workers are qualified as either unskilled or as semi-skilled;
* All companies are in heavy need for better qualification of their staff, respectively for trainings; the most needed trainings are in the processes/operations area; nonetheless, trainings are needed in all other fields within the company businesses;
* The trainings are mostly done ad hoc and do not have any long-term approach;

The survey confirms the vast potential that apprenticeships have in the Bulgarian T&C industry, since they represent a tool which has barely been exploited by companies. A major reason for this is the lack of adequate information which should motivate their interest. Moreover, there are no incentives from the state, yet, that should attract more companies to engage with apprentices.

On the other hand, there is missing interest within the young people (and society in general) to take part in apprenticeships. This is still wrongly seen as a low-image activity and there are hardly young people motivated to do apprentices in industrial companies. This fact is indicated by companies as a major recruitment problem, since they cannot rely on well-motivated apprentices with long-term ambitions to work in the industry.

Based on the above-said, not surprising is the statement that companies in general know little about apprenticeship, although not few of them have interest in the topic. All this leads to the conclusion that there is much “enlightenment” work to be done among companies in order for them to perceive apprenticeships as an important factor for their long-term success.