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# NATIONAL REPORT: POLAND

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Deliverable: IO1 – A2



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# 1. Apprenticeship Strategies and Policies

## 1.1. National Apprenticeship system

According to one of the biggest recruiting portals (Pracuj.pl), the first three quarters of year 2017 resulted in almost 8700 offers of internships and apprenticeships were published by the organisations. The main professional areas sought belonged to financial, trade, HR, IT and marketing sectors. According to the research conducted by Pracuj.pl, almost 83% of all students undertook internships or apprenticeships, from which 71,5% were in line with their qualifications and in 11% not. This proves that these forms of obtaining professional experience lies within a typical scheme of education for almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population. The most active organisations seeking people willing to undertake internships or apprenticeships represented banking, financial and insurance sectors. The biggest growth (around 24%) comparing to the previous period could be observed within construction and real estate sectors. The report highlights also that the most active organisations looking for apprentices and trainees are large companies employing over 250 employees. Such organisations provided 65% of all offers in the analysed period.

Without any surprises, the most active region of Poland is the Masovian voivodship, followed by Dolnośląskie and Śląskie. The distribution of the demand for apprentices and trainees broken down by voivodships is presented on the below graphic.

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## Zapotrzebowanie na stażystów i praktykantów według województw



Źródło: Pracuj.pl

*Demand for apprentices and trainees by voivodship in Poland (source: Pracuj.pl)*

It is important to mention also other bodies such as recruiting portals (such as pracuj.pl), social media, work fairs and career services (third level education). These are, according to the findings of the report “Grasz o staż”, the most frequently used ways that students take in order to find an apprenticeship or internship.

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It has to be underlined that apprenticeships and internships are the most popular way of a cooperation between the educational sector and companies in Poland, as the “Współpraca firm z sektorem edukacji” report reveals. The document explains, that the process of acquisition of new employees that are prepared to specific job is in companies’ own interest. According to the opinion of employers, new employees that are recruited do require further training, and in some cases this process can take up to two years.

Apart from voluntary apprenticeships or internships which all people are free to undertake, specific requirements are regulated by the ordinance of the Ministry of National Education on practical vocational training from 2017. The legal framework constitutes that in order to participate in WBL training, one needs to be at least 16 years old and has completed lower secondary school. More precisely it is constituted by the Council of Ministers on apprenticeship training of apprentices and also the regulation of the Minister for National Education on practical training for occupation. It is the Ministry for National Education that makes, through specific ordinances, legal decisions on vocational education. As per these legal documents, the apprenticeship can take two forms. The first one is referred to as “occupational training” (ISCED 3) and leads to qualification either as an apprentice or a skilled worker. This training takes from 24 to 36 months. The other form is called “apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job” (ISCED 2) with its scope covering only a number of selected work activities. This training takes from 3 up to 6 months.

## 1.2. National policies for apprenticeships

Apart from voluntary apprenticeships or internships which all people are free to undertake, specific requirements are regulated by the ordinance of the Ministry of National Education on practical vocational training from 2017. The legal framework constitutes that in order to participate in WBL training, one needs to be at least 16 years old and has completed lower secondary school. More precisely it is constituted by the Council of Ministers on apprenticeship training of apprentices and also the regulation of the Minister for National Education on practical training for occupation. It is the Ministry for National Education that makes, through specific ordinances, legal decisions on vocational education. As per these legal documents, the apprenticeship can take two forms. The first one is referred to as “occupational training” (ISCED 3) and leads to qualification either as an apprentice or a skilled worker. This training takes from 24 to 36 months. The other form is called

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“apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job” (ISCED 2) with its scope covering only a number of selected work activities. This training takes from 3 up to 6 months.

### 1.3. Apprenticeships and internationalization

The combination of apprenticeship and internationalization can be understood as practicing outside your own country.

This allows for acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, training and getting to know the language, meeting people, cultures and history, other work styles and management methods or simply as a chance to gain experience in your specialization.

They are (apprenticeships) undoubtedly a developing experience, allowing to broaden your horizons and often allow for a better professional start.

There are several international and national organizations in Poland that carry out such apprenticeships for students by helping them to prepare documentation, organize their place of residence or, the most obvious, by finding a company / organization that will accept them for such activities.

The most popular ones include:

- **Erasmus+**

It is a programme that allows for apprenticeships and internships abroad in companies operating in the participating countries, i.e. all EU countries and Croatia, Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The duration of the internship is between 3 and 12 months.

- **IASTE Poland**

It is an international program aimed at professional and linguistic development of students. It operates in more than 80 countries, such as Australia, Bangladesh, Mexico and South Africa.

These are only the 2 most popular programs, besides there are a lot of them and they are organized by various private companies or public institutions.

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## 2. Internationalisation of SMEs

### 2.1. National strategies supporting internationalization of SMEs

In Poland, SMEs constitute 99% of all enterprises. More and more often, companies from this sector also rely on foreign expansion. This allows them to increase their sales, attract new customers, increase their visibility or acquire new experience. In Poland, the organizations supporting internationalisation include:

- **PARP (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości / en. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development)**

One example of the activities of this government agency was a competition called "Internationalisation of SMEs". The project was implemented in Eastern Poland ("area covering the Lubelskie, Podlaskie, Podkarpackie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeships").

In the competition it was possible to receive support of up to 800 thousand PLN, which could be used to support products and services of SME companies from this region for new foreign markets.

This support may be provided for:

- consulting, which may relate to how to prepare a new business model for foreign markets,
- implementations of the new business model, necessary trainings, translations of documents, promotional materials,
- promotions and participation in fairs, exhibitions
- necessary equipment, real estate or, licences for computer programs or technologies necessary to start internationalised production.

- **Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu PAIH (Polish Investment and Trade Agency)**

This agency supports the internationalisation of companies by providing assistance on how they can obtain governmental assistance in a given country and by supporting Polish companies by promoting their products internationally.

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- **Krajowa Izba Gospodarcza KIG (National Chamber of Commerce)**

KIG is an organization that associates over 150 companies, which makes it the largest business organization of this profile in Poland. As far as its involvement in supporting internationalisation in Poland is concerned, it is responsible, among others, for:

- advisory services in the field of export to foreign markets,
- helping to find business partners abroad.

- **Centrum Obsługi Inwestora i Eksportera (COIE) (en. Investor and Exporter Service Centre)**

As far as internationalisation activities are concerned, this agency can support activities aimed at both assisting foreign investors on Polish markets and supporting local investors who want to start operating on foreign markets.

- **Enterprise Europe Network**

The EEN is a world leader when it comes to supporting the internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises. The services they provide include consultancy assistance or enabling access to new and innovative technologies.

These are just a few examples of how different entities can receive support on the Polish market to enter foreign markets.

## 2.2. Good Practices on supporting internationalization of SMEs

*In this unit will be presented good practices (successful stories) regarding SMEs' export activities in partner countries. By analyzing good practices, we will identify which companies or sectors have more possibilities to establish successful cross-border activities.*

### 1. INFIRE

Infire is a Polish company from the SME sector, which is engaged in designing and producing bio-fireplaces. Apart from creating and selling standard bio-fireplaces that are on offer, Infire also sells custom made bio-fireplaces. Fireplaces are powered by liquid fuel. The company took advantage of the previously mentioned competition "Internationalisation of SMEs". The aim was to start the expansion into new, foreign markets. The company believed that this would allow them to develop faster and become more independent.

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Before starting the process of internationalization, the company set itself several goals, among them were:

- recognisability on German markets,
- a network of dealers in the largest agglomerations in Germany,
- financial result allowing further expansion into other foreign markets.

Then the consulting company conducted marketing tests and sector analysis to check the company's potential and market openness.

The results turned out to be positive and it was possible to start creating a business model and further activities to introduce to foreign markets.

The tasks introduced included:

- creating a detailed marketing campaign plan,
- developing and translating documents,
- establishing contacts with business partners,
- active participation in international fair.

The company has been successful and today operates in the EU, USA and Turkey market.

### **Greenvit**

Greenvit was founded in 2010 and is a producer of plant extracts and raw materials for the feed industry and dietary supplements. The company decided to take advantage of PARP's leadership program to develop a new financial model and expand abroad. The company was decided to expand into the UK, Spain, China, South Korea and Singapore and the product which was to play a key role was to be plant extracts.

The funding was used to participate in international fairs and find partners in the countries mentioned above.

## 3. In-company Trainers

### 3.1. Development of in company trainers' skills and competences

#### **Analysis of the Target Group opinion**

The analysis of the target group (VET teacher, VET tutor, in-company trainers) was carried out by face-to-face interviews. 10 people from each target group were interviewed and 30 answers were collected.

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Thematically, the issues were divided into 2 areas:

1. Training Competences - which consisted of:

- Training (learning) needs assessment;
- Training design;
- Training delivery;
- Assessment of learning.

2. Personal Competences - which included:

- Generic competences;
- Cooperation and consultation;
- Self-assessment.

The task of the respondents was to determine the importance of this competencies on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is the minimum and 5 is the maximum).

On the basis of the collected answers, we can formulate the following conclusions:

**1. Training Competences**

*"Training (learning) needs assessment"*

In Poland, the largest number of respondents (18) stated that the most important skill here is "Ability to assess the existing competences of apprentices".

Interesting results are presented by the question referring to "Ability to combine company's internationalization needs and learners' skills". Here we can see that there is a certain disproportion and definitely the lowest grade from the target group. 2 respondents assigned a grade of 2 a, and 8 a grade of 3 to this point.

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### *"Training design"*

Ability to design the training content by combining theoretical and practical parts was a definite favourite here, according to the study group. It can be seen that among the target group in Poland the acquisition of practical skills is still valued the most. Other statements that received high marks are "Ability to choose relevant content and methodology" and "Ability to design a training program based on learning needs of apprenticeship". (26 and 24 respondents).

The group of statements that were rated lowest were "Ability to design a training program devoted to the company's internationalization needs" and "Ability to choose the relevant structure for the training".

These are quite surprising results, especially as one of them concerns internationalization, which once again appears as the lowest rated (which does not mean that it was rated low, answers 4 and 5 were given by a total of 26 respondents out of 30).

### *"Training delivery"*

Here, almost everyone has marked answers of 4 and 5, which may show how important teaching techniques and material selection are, keeping students highly motivated or creating a positive learning environment.

### *"Assessment of learning"*

This area was devoted to the evaluation of both learners and methods. There have been relatively many responses with a weighting of 2 and 3, which may mean that the target group values the approach to the classroom and the use of technology (Training delivery) rather than student assessment.

It is noteworthy that the statement to which 25 respondents gave a grade of 5 was "Ability to provide feedback and guidance to learners". This shows that what counts more for the target group is the ability to provide feedback to learners than just grading them.

## **2. Personal Competences**

### *"Generic competences"*

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This is the most severely evaluated area. Only here the weighting of 1 (the lowest) appeared and it concerned areas:

- Coaching and mentoring skills
- Conflict and crisis management
- Networking

In addition, there were quite a few grades of 2 and 3.

#### *"Cooperation and consultation"*

In the case of this area, it looks completely different from the previous one. Here, positive answers prevail, in each statement more than 25 respondents out of 30 marked the answer "5".

It is similar with the last area

#### *"Self assessment"*

Here too, at least 25 respondents marked the answer "5" for each statement.

The conducted research showed what the target group from Poland thinks about the issues raised in this project.

### 3.2. Learning and certification opportunities of in-company trainers

In Poland, there are no requirements imposed on the in-company trainers concerning what soft / hard skills they should have. However, agreements that are signed by, for example, a university with a private company clearly state the responsibilities that rest with the trainers, and often then there may be a requirement that the university places on the trainers of the apprentices (in Poland, this is particularly evident for example in the construction industry, where the in-company trainer and the patron of the internship often stand out).

Training courses are organized in Poland to prepare future in-company trainers for their role (they are not obligatory of course).

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They most often concern pedagogical education and training in human management (in this case learning how to effectively manage and motivate apprentices).

Thanks to such training, future in-company trainers will be able to create a good atmosphere of cooperation and influence the perception of the company by apprentices.

Participation in such courses usually also involves obtaining a certificate confirming the acquired knowledge.

It also happens that such courses are conducted on-line (although the standard course structure based on physical presence nevertheless dominates).

In the case of large corporations, it may be that such courses are conducted within the organisation.

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