



Developing Innovative and Attractive CVET programmes in industrial shoe production

Position Paper

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1 DIA-CVET Position Paper

Position Paper on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the relevance of Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) developed within the EU-co-funded project “Developing Innovative and Attractive CVET programmes in industrial shoe production (DIA-CVET)”.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to policy-making in the European industrial shoe production sector and beyond with respect to curricula-driven work-based learning (WBL) within Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET). The European industrial shoe production sector is mainly focussed on high quality products. Key factors are innovative design, quality, quick reaction to fashion trends as well as a wide range of styles and colours. Some companies also focus on small but demanding markets, such as safety shoes or shoes for healthcare e.g. orthopaedic shoes.

However, the competitiveness of the sector is highly depending on knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) of the staff gained through Initial Vocational Education and Training and further developed within CVET. These competences are needed to design, produce, operate and maintain cutting-edge products and manufacturing systems.

In the last decade, however, industrial shoe producers have seen a shortage of skilled workers and innovative mind-sets, hampering the competitiveness of EU shoe production industry and the employability of workers. WBL within CVET helps to maintain the quality standards of products and provides new opportunities for industry and its staff.

With that in mind, this position paper aims to help decision-makers all over the EU to recognise the importance of curricula-driven WBL within CVET in the European industrial shoe production sector and to provide them with a series of recommendations to support the development of competences and skills in this area. The DIA-CVET project mainly aimed at strengthening CVET as a crucial element of increasing attractiveness of VET and assuring its high quality. Target groups are colleagues, having been qualified via Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) in the sector of industrial shoe production in Germany, Portugal and Romania. Furthermore, project partners developed a Sector Qualification Framework (SQF) for levels 5-7 and referenced the national qualifications of Germany, Portugal and Romania.

In this position paper, we would like to highlight the project recommendations for further developing curricula-driven WBL as a promising approach in CVET in Germany, Portugal, Romania and all other EU countries, as well.

Due to rapidly changing technological developments and to altering trends in fashion, WBL becomes more and more crucial for today's learners in industrial shoe production industry. The competitiveness of manufacturing companies depends on the skills possessed by its workforce, especially on medium level. Often these positions are filled with staff holding a degree in Higher Education (HE) with poor knowledge of sector-specific conditions and tasks. To increase sector-specific skills, CVET should be strengthened; we call on VET regulatory bodies across Europe to integrate substantial curricula-driven WBL as part of all CVET programmes.

It is necessary for the CVET-systems of any country that all stakeholders work together in order to define comprehensive learning outcomes in accordance with national legislation. Therefore modernisation of CVET-curricula should be executed jointly by responsible regional or national

authorities, employers, vocational education and training institutions, chambers of industry, commerce and crafts, professional and sectorial organisations and trade unions to ensure a fair balance between work, job specific skills, knowledge and key competences of the beneficiaries.

In order to recruit more young people for an apprenticeship in industrial shoe production, the sector needs to become more attractive. Therefore, improving CVET programmes and drafting clear career opportunities should be high on the agenda of the competent bodies from shoe sector.

Educational reforms cannot be imported from one EU member state to another or implemented “top-down”. Thus we recommend that stakeholders from any country reflect on approaches from various different CVET-systems – and adopt respective develop their system with respect to national traditions and beliefs.

In-company trainers are essential for WBL. They should cooperate closely with vocational education and training institutions and external teachers or trainers to provide guidance for beneficiaries of CVET and to ensure mutual and regular feedback. Therefore, they need to be supported in gaining sector-specific and general (didactical) skills. For instance, this could be done by promoting the use of the DIA-CVET train the trainer manuals as well as the feedback questionnaires, which were developed and launched by this EU project.

Trainers need to be supported by industry and authorities to update their skills, knowledge and competences in order to train apprentices according to the latest teaching and training methods and labour market needs. We recommend that countries develop and provide adult education courses for trainers and mentors and offer those via CVET providers, for example by using the manual of the sphere of activity “training management”.

The developed SQF level 5-7 is a guiding document for transparency and mobility within industrial shoe production. It includes a comparison of qualifications in industrial shoe production sector in Germany, Portugal and Romania based on a common understanding of what defines competences and taking into account the diversity and traditions of continuous vocational education, training systems and policy priorities in the partner countries. It offers an overview on competences and skills of qualified staff in all partner countries. We recommend that any new or updated profile in the sector from partner countries as well as qualifications from other EU countries should be levelled in this SQF.

1.1 List of endorsers

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