

# Eleven countries, one goal:

success through vocational training



DIHK

**vetnet**

German Chambers worldwide network (AHK) for  
cooperative, work-based Vocational Education & Training



*Prof Dr Johanna Wanka,  
Federal Minister of Education  
and Research*

Abroad, there is firm interest in the German dual vocational training system. One reason for this is the high employment rate in Germany. In Germany, the transition from vocational training to working life works better than in other countries. In February 2015, the unemployment rate of young people under 25 years of age was at 7.2 per cent in Germany, while the EU average was at 21.1 per cent.

In Europe and all over the world, many countries see Germany as a model for their reforms of vocational training. Within the scope of its vocational training cooperation, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports countries that are interested in the dual system. Since 2013, the BMBF also supports the project “VETnet - German Chambers worldwide network for cooperative, work-based Vocational Education & Training” of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), the Worldwide Network of the German Chambers of Commerce (AHKs), Delegations and Representatives. Often it is a huge challenge to convince companies to offer and finance practice-oriented vocational training. This is where VETnet comes into play.

With VETnet, AHKs have initiated vocational training networks in eleven countries on three continents and have convinced both local and German companies of pilot-type dual vocational training - with the participation of local vocational schools, government institutions as well as social partners and trade associations. The focus is on the companies and their respective needs for skilled employees. For this, the AHKs offer a platform and ensure the quality of the dual vocational training system.

This brochure presents the results of the pilot projects and the challenges that the players were faced with during the course of the project. I thank all participants for their commitment and hope that the VETnet project will continue to be successful. Because VETnet gives young people around the world prospects for life.

Prof Dr Johanna Wanka



*Dr Eric Schweitzer,  
President of the Association of  
German Chambers of Commerce  
and Industry*

Vocational training in Germany is the cornerstone for securing skilled labour in our companies. It increases our business locations' competitiveness and offers young people excellent career prospects. The success story for dual vocational training “made in Germany” is currently generating a high level of interest in Europe and the rest of the world - and rightly so. Our model serves as a role model. For German industry and politics, it is a mission and commitment at the same time to support countries, companies and young people.

The advantages of cooperation between industry and politics in vocational training are emphasized by the strategic VETnet project. The support of the BMBF enables the AHKs in eleven partner countries to establish vocational training according to a local model for German and local companies. Although the German dual system is not simply transferable via “copy and paste” it does have some success factors that can work anywhere in the world. Through our German Chambers of Commerce abroad, the project makes the core elements of dual vocational training visible, to what extent they are transferable to countries in other regions of the world, and how they need to be adjusted to the local circumstances. Our joint project aims at creating sustainable structures. For their member companies and stakeholders, AHKs act as platforms as well as consultants and provide quality assurance for high-quality dual vocational training. Together and with the experience gained locally DIHK and BMBF can provide important impulses for vocational education reforms in the eleven partner countries.

Within the scope of the VETnet project, the outstanding cooperation of BMBF and DIHK has proven its value once again. DIHK, IHKs and AHKs would like to continue and strengthen this partnership in order to boost dual vocational training in Europe and the rest of the world - and to give many young people better prospects for the future.

Dr Eric Schweitzer



# PREFACE



# FROM SHANGHAI TO LATVIA, FROM PORTUGAL TO SÃO PAULO

In October 2013, the project 'German Chambers worldwide network for cooperative, work-based Vocational Education & Training' - or VETnet - started in eleven AHKs on three continents. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), structures for the implementation of dual vocational training are to be established and tested in pilot projects. Six EU countries in Southern and Eastern Europe as well as five emerging countries were selected for this purpose: Brazil, China, Greece, India, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain and Thailand.

## Goal

VETnet aims at portraying the German dual system of vocational training as an alternative to an occupational career that is shaped by attending university and thus improving the situation in the labour market of the countries participating in the project: all selected countries suffer from high unemployment among young people which are 25 years of age or younger. With the introduction of dual vocational training pilot projects, more young people will be qualified, which at the same time also benefits the increased and wide-spread need for a skilled workforce for the local economy - this also applies to German companies increasing their international production in the process of globalization.

## Challenge

A particularly high obstacle is the image problem of vocational training: it is still regarded as inferior to a career based on university studies. It is often associated with attributes such as dirty, loud, uncool. A mere look into the curricula and training facilities shows that this judgement is not true: increasingly, workbenches are replaced by laptops; job opportunities of trained mechatronics technicians are often better than those of university graduates. Awareness still needs to be raised in this context. AHKs understand this and, with various image campaigns, they also support "pro dual" in this respect.

DUAL  
VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING  
BMBF

DIHK  
GERMAN  
CHAMBERS OF  
COMMERCE  
ABROAD

## Network

With its contacts to the industry and politics, the AHK network is an important platform for dual vocational training in the partner countries. On the one hand, the AHKs bundle the companies' needs and represent their interests and, on the other hand, by being in close contact with the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs), they can draw on decades of experience in vocational education and training.

The initial situation in the partner countries was different. While some AHKs already possessed extensive expertise and experience in the field of vocational training, structures in other AHKs first needed to be created. The AHK Portugal, for one, can look back on a tradition of over 30 years in vocational training; with three training centres, the Chamber is a recognized partner for local businesses. In Latvia and Brazil, however, the initial steps of

TRAINING SITES  
LABOUR MARKET  
'GERMAN MODEL'  
COOPERATION  
11 COUNTRIES  
PILOT PROJECTS  
TRAINEES  
NETWORKING  
PLATFORM  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
FUTURE EXPORT  
AHK  
REGIONAL ADAPTATION  
PROFESSIONALS

the project were testing the waters for vocational training and establishing a suitable network. Together and with the help of their partners, the AHKs managed to get decision-makers enthusiastic about the dual system and to get them on board in their respective countries. With this, they were able to attract a multitude of companies to launch new training courses. In fact, approximately 3,000 young people are currently being trained in appropriate projects at the eleven VETnet locations.

But this is only the beginning. VETnet is to help establishing cooperative and practice-based vocational training in the long term. It is clear that the 'German model' cannot and should not be copied one-to-one because all locations have local requirements and unique features. That is why, in terms of specific arrangements, the different AHKs' paths vary significantly. However, within the scope of this project, they will create a sustainable business

model for vocational training that meets the needs of the industry and of those local young people - even beyond already existing VETnet locations.

## Summary

After almost two years of VETnet it is clear that the eleven countries were able to establish local expertise, connect partners, develop curricula and create new training courses.

However, much remains to be done, quite a few obstacles have yet to be taken, and sustainability and connectivity have to be guaranteed in the long term. But a start has been made and the way has been paved for a successful practice-based dual vocational training.

# VETNET AT A GLANCE

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## PORTUGAL

In the course of its existence of more than 60 years, AHK Portugal can look back on the development of a wide range of successful services. But VETnet poses a particular challenge. In this section: new solutions, proven methods, outstanding opportunities with vocational training and trainees who are proud of their work.

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## BRAZIL

4,780 hours of practical training in Germany versus 960 hours of practical training in Brazil. In this section: the great level of encouragement from companies, the pooling of two vocational training systems, demanding partners and a lot of convincing.

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## SPAIN

More and more companies now turn to the AHK for better advice on the interaction of theory and practice, and interest continues to increase. In this section: the AHK as a link between Spanish vocational training and local German IHK quality marker as well as the seal of approval 'Train-the-Trainer'.

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## SLOVAKIA

The lack of skilled workers and youth unemployment should be compelling arguments for vocational training. However, it has a bad image. In this section: the double meaning of the term 'dual vocational training' becoming the major focus of an election campaign.

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## ITALY

20 regions and one goal: the implementation of dual vocational training. Here, VETnet is confronted with players that haven't communicated much with one another so far. In this section: the challenges of a decentralized educational system and Lombardy as a pioneer of vocational training.

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## GREECE

53.1 per cent youth unemployment is a huge burden for Greece. Dual training provides a powerful tool to combat this. In this section: the cooperation of the AHK with the IHK Frankfurt, the participation of the Greek national railway company and the consequences of the change in government.

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## LATVIA

An enthusiastic European collaborating with important stakeholders of vocational education successfully set the goal to open up new prospects for young people. In this section: perseverance, strong determination and the start of the first dual vocational training programme in Latvia.

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## RUSSIA

Six vocational training occupations, four locations - VETnet's success speaks for itself. Yet, the obstacles remain high. In this section: concrete proposals for solutions, legislative initiatives and the opportunities of dual vocational training.

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## CHINA

With practical training, the 'workbench of the world' wants to rise and become the world's innovation society. In this section: a hunger for knowledge, ambitious goals, entrepreneurial concerns, a national award and the principle of lifelong learning.

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## INDIA

"What if ..." - VETnet encounters questions, technical challenges - and enthusiastic partners. In this section: the commitment of an AHK, the support of a former vocational school teacher and creative solutions when it comes to addressing problems.

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## THAILAND

In January 2015, a bilateral memorandum of understanding was signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Thailand, now its implementation follows. In this section: the opportunities of German education and young people who have confidence in the dual system.

# VETNET IN BRAZIL

## VETnet – a new challenge

By Patrícia Caires

The German-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (AHK Brazil-São Paulo) has about 30 years of experience in the realization of courses and workshops in the commercial sector. With VETnet, we have now opened a new door to implement the dual vocational training in technical and commercial fields.

Vocational training in Brazil differs from the German system mainly in volume and in the distribution of theoretical and practical training: while in Germany vocational training has a volume of 5,800 hours, Brazil only requires 1,600 hours. In Germany, 4,780 hours account for the practical part, in Brazil, it is a mere 960 hours. This clearly shows that in Germany, the focus is more on practical training. This is precisely what we wanted for Brazil as well, but naturally we needed additional time. So we generally recommended our partners and targeted companies to extend the current two-year training period by one year.

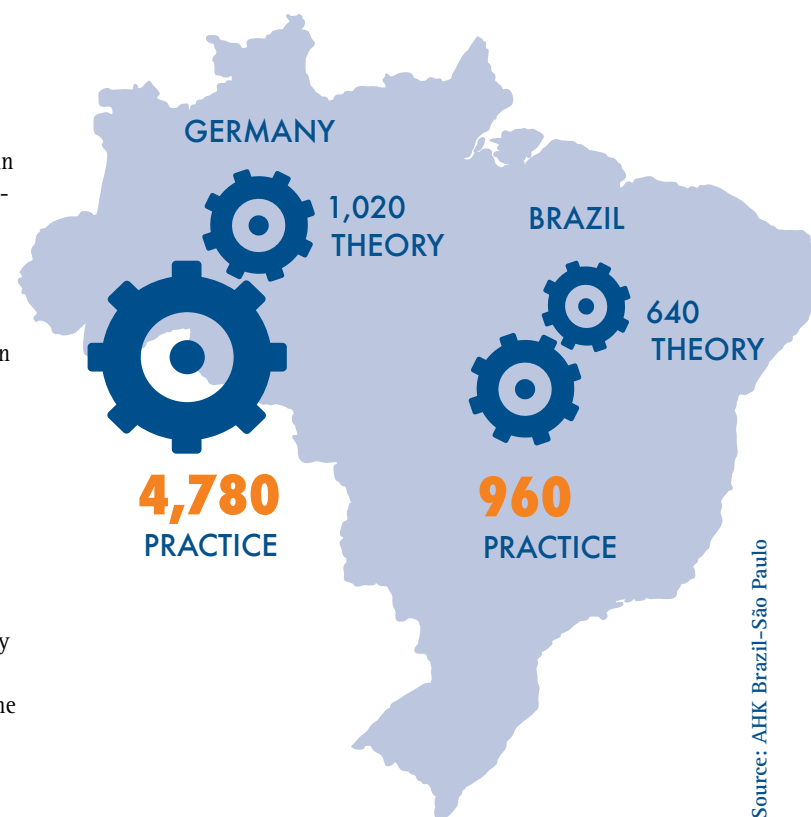
### Acquiring partners

From the very beginning of the project, we tried to acquire SENAI (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial), the largest provider of education in the technical area as our partner. But since setting up the cooperation with SENAI used up half of the project's term, not least due to the lengthy decision-making processes within Brazil, we were pressed for time when it came to implementation.

### Kick-off event with German entrepreneurs

However, attendance of the kick-off event in October 2014 already surpassed all of our expectations. Among the 60 attendees were representatives from many large German companies headquartered in Brazil, such as Voith, Volkswagen, ZF, BMW and Daimler, and also a representative from SENAI. Needless to say, the question of whether training a skilled workforce following the 'German model' is worthwhile was raised, as there is always a risk of subsequent labour movement. Dr Michael Blank of the DIHK could dispel this concern with his report on how German companies deal with this challenge. Although confirming a certain risk, he also mentioned that it would be far more detrimental for a company to employ untrained staff.

Merely a day later we achieved a first success: the company Stihl in Southern Brazil was interested in our project. At that time, Stihl was already training skilled workers to



Practical experience dominates training in Germany, while in Brazil so far mostly theoretical knowledge is taught (average number of training hours in the industrial sector)

become tool mechanics, but the company still had to be convinced of the benefits which are effective in the long term of a dual education program. By now, we have succeeded - Stihl will introduce training for tool mechanics following the German standards and is ready to launch a pilot project with us.

### 1,400 German companies in Brazil

Within the scope of VETnet, dual vocational training following the 'German model' is to be introduced in the four additional Brazilian states of São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, where most of the German companies are based. Germany is in fact one of the largest foreign investors in Brazil; in the past five years alone more than 300 German companies set up branches there. With this, currently over 1,400 companies have a subsidiary in Brazil, employing 250,000 workers in total while contributing approx. ten per cent to the industrial GDP of Brazil - a huge potential for local dual training.

More and more German companies in Brazil are interested in the project. The chances for success are very good at this stage; however, more time will be needed for the implementation than was initially planned. Both the companies and SENAI recognize our services' benefits in terms of know-how and are more and more willing to commit to the VETnet project even more.

### Cooperation with SENAI

During the cooperation, we have designed an action plan with SENAI, in order to allow the companies to gain better insight into the dual vocational training. For this, in April 2015, SENAI went on a delegation trip to Germany with vocational school teachers as well as representatives from the AHK Brazil-São Paulo. We organized visits to companies so that the responsible persons could receive first-hand information. SENAI plans to incorporate the impressions from the trip into the VETnet project during our future cooperation.

### SENAI – Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial

SENAI (English: 'National service for industrial vocational training') is a private Brazilian institution of the industry association. Since 1942, the institution is legally mandated to provide vocational courses for industrial occupations. SENAI is funded by industrial companies through a compulsory levy of one per cent of paid wages. Currently, SENAI has 1,022 subsidiaries throughout Brazil and offers courses in 28 industry sectors to 3.7 million trainees. In addition, SENAI cooperates with universities and is active in continuing education.

### TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE DELEGATION TRIP:



João Santa Rosa –  
SENAI São Paulo

"I see the basis for the dual system in solid training of the trainers. Now, a major challenge for SENAI is cooperation with the government regarding the restructuring of the Institute of Industrial Teaching."



Michael Eberle Siemeintcoski –  
SENAI Santa Catarina

"In the dual system, curricula will be developed in consultation with the industry. In this context, SENAI can operate in a way that is more intensively adapted to the requirements of specific industries."



Robison Gionedes –  
SENAI Paraná

"We noted similarities between Brazilian and German institutions of vocational training. We would like to emphasize that the longer duration of training of German trainers, based on the specific methodology, is reflected in the quality of education."



# VETNET IN CHINA

## German-Chinese cooperation in vocational education

By Britta Buschfeld

The People's Republic of China is one of the most important international locations for the German economy; the demand for well-trained skilled workers is correspondingly high. The Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Shanghai (AHK China-Shanghai) has supported the country in its efforts for vocational education and the establishment of corresponding training structures for more than ten years.

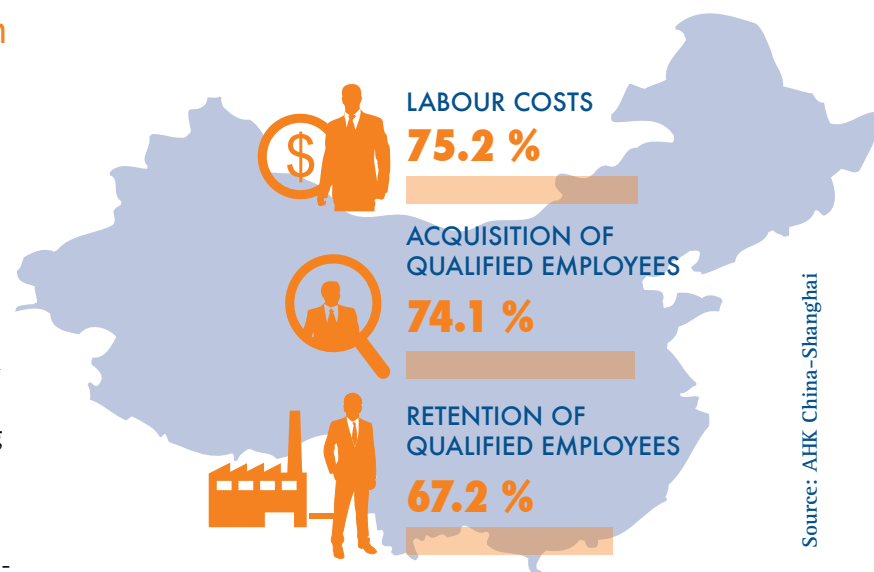
In Taicang, where more than 200 German companies are located, one of the first vocational education cooperation programmes was established to support the organization of skilled labour. To further support the cooperation between Germany and China in a sustainable fashion, the AHK has continuously structured and expanded its coordination and competence centre in Shanghai since 2010. It now has an important bridging function between German and Chinese partners in the field of vocational training, which was further promoted by the VETnet project.

Through the structural design of bi-national vocational training and examination committees in the fields of mechatronics, industrial mechanics, logistics, brewing and malting, the coordination of national competence teams in selected occupational areas as well as the implementation expertise in examination and certification-related issues, the AHK has become a major player in German-Chinese vocational education cooperation.

### National award for the AHK China-Shanghai

The 'National Award for Vocational Training Services' was established in 1989 by the Chinese State Council and has since then been awarded to outstanding projects and services in the education sector every four years.

The AHK China-Shanghai and the Chien Shiung Institute in Taicang were awarded second place in February 2015 for their tried-and-tested concept of the study and implementation of the model of 'dual training with a fixed workplace' (modern apprenticeship model).



Source: AHK China-Shanghai

A survey of the AHK China-Shanghai conducted among its member companies from the year 2014 proves: the three biggest challenges of German companies in a foreign country concern the area of human resources and vocational training

The offer of quality-assured and standardized vocational training and continuing education is supported by the competence network of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and promoted through close cooperation with the relevant players of the vocational education landscape in Germany as well as in China. Currently, approximately 60 companies of the manufacturing industry are supported in dual vocational training projects in many regions of China. In close cooperation with relevant players of vocational training both on a centralized and a provincial level (including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour as well as renowned research institutions), joint approaches are agreed upon, the introduction and development of content and certification standards are coordinated as well as new projects of vocational education cooperation are realized.

In cooperation with several government institutions, the AHK China-Shanghai accompanies the reform process of the Chinese government in the field of vocational training. Initial education and master qualification, teacher and trainer qualification, examiner training and continuing education are just as much part of the portfolio of the AHK as consultation of relevant players and the active involvement and support of the German companies.

## Lifelong learning is a factor for the future

Since February 2015, Simone Pohl is Delegate and Chief Representative of the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce Shanghai. Previously, she was the CEO of the AHK USA-Chicago. She talked with Dr Michael Blank about the differences in education between the two countries and the potential of education in China.



*The issue 'skills shortage' also played a major role for the local economy in the United States. Do you already recognize differences between the challenges that German companies face in China and the United States?*

Here in China, the major issue is the strong emphasis on theoretical knowledge in the educa-

tion system - regardless of whether we are talking about vocational or academic education. Including companies as dual partners is one of the major challenges that the Chinese education system is currently facing. Although the government paved the way for stronger cooperation with companies - now is the time to implement the reforms they announced. The German commitment and the role of German companies in China are key elements in improving the local situation of skilled labour. In the United States, most German companies complained about the lack of well-trained professionals, vocational education is to a large part realized individually and not organized on a centralized level. Until now, the dual system has been largely unknown, but industry and politics become increasingly aware of it as something positive.

*Where in China do you see the biggest opportunities for the introduction of elements of dual vocational training? And where, in your view, are its limits?*

The biggest challenge is that the country wants to get away from its image as the 'workbench of the world' and wants to become an innovation society by 2020. To achieve this, China must focus on higher-quality production and develop proprietary technologies. This also implies a change in education towards a stronger practical focus. Vocational and continuing education but also education with a dual structure are going to evolve. This development offers great opportunities, but also challenges. One example is the increasing involvement of companies in the training of specialists. This requires, first of all, a clarification of roles and responsibilities and an enormous willingness on the part of the players involved to take this path together. As a competence and coordination centre for vocational education, the AHK China-Shanghai is taking over a multi-

tude of quality-assurance and coordinating tasks - and has been doing so for more than ten years.

*The concept of 'lifelong learning' plays an increasingly important role for the future specialists in trade and industry. For this, the willingness to learn is crucial. How is the situation in China?*

Education in all facets and stages of life is highly valued in China and accordingly promoted by politics: the emphasis on lifelong learning as an educational mandate is firmly rooted in the concepts of the Chinese government. This already starts in kindergarten, continues through the private sector, covers the entire area of vocational training, and continues to go further into the area of university education and subsequent professional life. This special 'thirst for knowledge' is a wonderful trait of the people here in this country.

The fact that competition and pressure to perform are high in China from a young age, however, should not be concealed.

For employees in companies, regular participation in qualifications is an important part of their benefits package. The AHK China-Shanghai for example offers support with more than 300 certification training courses a year. With this, we increase motivation and reduce employee turnover. For an institution such as the AHK that is predominantly based on 'knowledge and networking', employees are the most valuable asset, without which a successful range of services is not possible. The expansion of our vocational education activities is not only in our customers' interest, but also our own employees'.



Apprentices during practical training on the lathe at the Professional College of Science and Technology in Wuxi

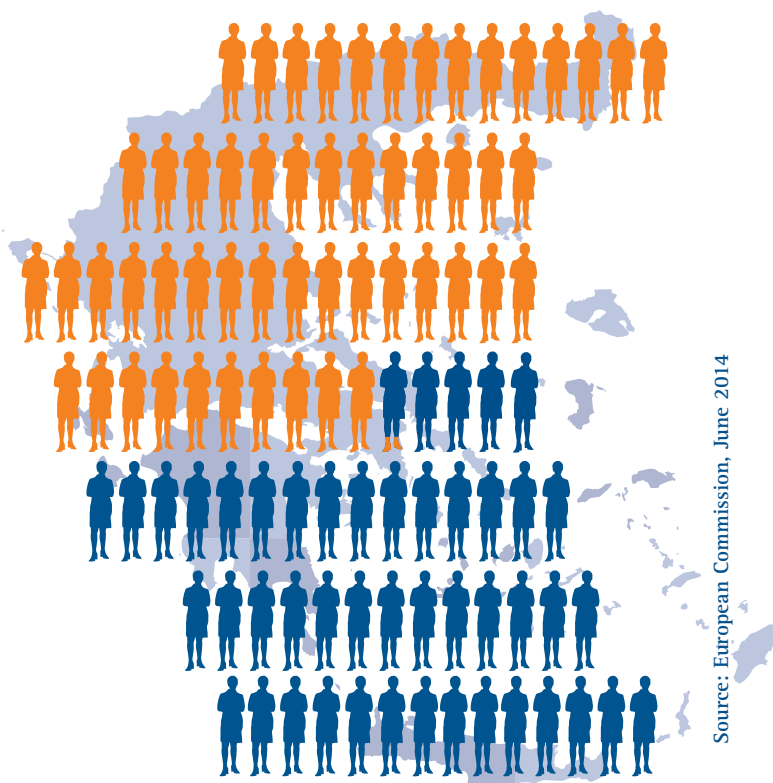
# VETNET IN GREECE

## German-Greek cooperation in dual vocational training in railway transportation

By Nicky Gounda

Youth unemployment is one of the most serious consequences of the ongoing economic and financial crisis in Greece. Although vocational training based on the 'German model' has already been existing in Greece since 1954, the image of vocational training is not the best. The academic path is still preferred because through this young people hope for better opportunities in the labour market. In addition, dual vocational training is not regarded as significant by companies since they cannot select their trainees themselves but are assigned trainees by the Greek employment agency (OAED). That is why alternatives to this Greek practice have to be created for young people as well as companies in order to provide them with other prospects.

Here, the VETnet project offers an excellent opportunity to promote the dual vocational training system and to show young people another way into professional life. We started the project with a survey among our member companies. Since the German-Greek Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Greece) already has experience in vocational training in the area of tourism, which it gained within the scope of other activities, it was important for us to enshrine VETnet in further sectors. The survey indicated that companies see the greatest need for action in technical and commercial professions.



## 53.1 % YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

In 2014, more than half of the 15 to 24-year-olds were unemployed in Greece

Stefanos Agiassoglou, the president and managing director of the Hellenic Company for Rolling Stock Maintenance S.A. (EESSTY S.A.), also called our attention to the acute skills shortage in his company: the average age of the workforce is high; many are set to retire in the next two years while there are no successors. When we presented him the benefits of dual vocational education and training and the opportunities for his company, the commitment to participate in the project swiftly followed: the Greek railway company was ready to provide 120 apprenticeship training positions in the trades of motor mechatronics technician and electronics technician for system devices.

We found our teaching partner for the project in the OAED. The OAED is a state-recognized vocational education provider that takes over the training and employment agency function for the state. We had worked with the OAED on another project and wanted to expand this great partnership. We received crucial support from Germany from Dr Brigitte Scheuerle and her colleagues at the IHK Frankfurt. When we accompanied a German-Greek delegation trip to Frankfurt in June 2014, led by the Parliamentary State Secretary Hans-Joachim Fuchtel, we had the opportunity



Trainees of Deutsche Bahn in Ludwigshafen convince the Greek visitors of the practical relevance of the German education model

to visit the centre for vocational training and continuing education of the German railway company Deutsche Bahn in Ludwigshafen, where Mr. Agiassoglou could see the German vocational training system for himself.

Back in Greece, the next important step followed: the establishment of the vocational education committee. This body serves as a decision-making authority and discussion platform for questions regarding the adjustment of curricula and marketing measures. A first success was the quick translation and adaptation of the curricula for the trades of mechatronics technician and systems electronics technician that we were able to complete together with EESSTY and

## "We are establishing 'ambassadors' for the German-Greek economic relations"

An interview with Dr Brigitte Scheuerle, Managing Director of the department of vocational training and continuing education of the IHK Frankfurt am Main



*The AHK-IHK partnership - what exactly does this mean for the collaboration on the VETnet project of the IHK Frankfurt with the AHK Greece?*

As the IHK Frankfurt, we offer the transfer of know-how and inform responsible persons from Greece about our vocational education system during delegation

trips. The colleagues from the AHK in Athens also sat in on us for a while and observed our daily operations. Through this, they experienced in very practical terms how we consult training companies and organize examinations. Furthermore, we will also supervise the first examinations of the vocational training projects in Athens.

*Why is the IHK Frankfurt interested in this cooperation?*

We learn a lot about the introduction and implementation of dual vocational training abroad. Experiences gained in this way provide us with valuable information on feasibility and transferability, also for upcoming projects with other countries.

*How could the AHK-IHK cooperation for the VETnet project be shaped in the future?*

When it comes to implementing the project, communication between individual AHKs facing similar challenges in many locations is very important. At the same time, this communication should be accompanied by experienced IHKs in order to achieve a standardization of the work of the AHK-IHK partnership, because dual vocational training is a core brand of the IHK organization. This essentially includes a consistent quality, which must be guaranteed

the OAED. We are very proud of the great cooperation with these two institutions.

However, a ministerial decree is still missing for recognition of planned vocational training. Unfortunately, the procurement of such a decree fell through due to the change in government as it was followed by the replacement of the staff in all the ministries and the OAED. Now contacts need to be reestablished first in order to put the issue of vocational education back onto the agenda of the new government. Initial feedback makes us optimistic for the future.

around the world. In Germany, we already carry out nationally consistent uniform examinations. Such standardization should be aimed at for AHK activities in any case, although the heterogeneity of individual countries is to be taken into account.

*How does your commitment appeal to the member companies in Frankfurt?*

Excellently: with the help of this project, we have already been able to initiate bilateral meetings for leading companies such as Siemens, Deutsche Bahn, or Nestlé. Particularly valuable is the knowledge gained about the processes of the allocation of tasks to the DIHK, the relevant AHK and the individual company that would like to implement training in its subsidiary abroad. We were already able to incorporate these experiences in several consultations in our Frankfurt-based companies. An interesting side effect of our commitment in Greece were contacts to projects such as MobiPro-EU as well as studies in which we measured the attractiveness of the Frankfurt vocational training and labour market for Greeks interested in mobility.

*What do you think: which impulses can be expected through a strong VETnet partnership between the two countries, against the backdrop of the economic crisis in Greece?*

Despite the fact that the political cooperation between Athens and the EU or Germany is not always easy at the moment: we Germans experience an incredible appreciation for our vocational education system and a great open-mindedness of the Greek partners to change the existing Greek system of vocational training. If young Greeks can secure a future in their country as well as in Germany by obtaining the AHK-DIHK certificate through the VETnet project, we establish long-term 'ambassadors' for German-Greek economic relations.

The interview was conducted by Sabine Kotsch



# VETNET IN INDIA

## "What if we train them and they leave?"

By Frank Hoffmann

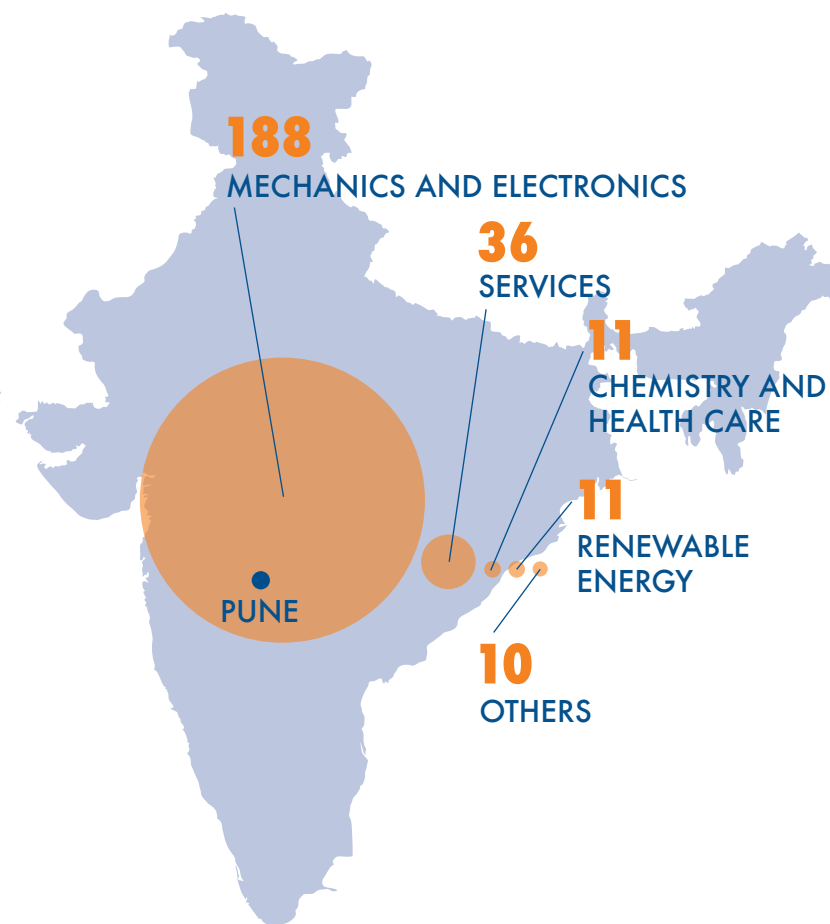
We heard this sentence so many times that we are now all the more proud to have implemented the project.

When we started the project at the end of 2013, the topic of vocational training was not a complete novelty for the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce (AHK India). We have been training industrial business management assistants in our Indo-German training centres since 1991; at Volkswagen in Pune and the Gedee Technical Training Institute in Coimbatore we have been organizing the mechatronics technician's examinations for a long time. But during this project we soon realized that despite our knowledge it is a disproportionately greater challenge to replicate elements of a dual vocational training system that has been growing in Germany for centuries.

After we had spent six months to get an overview of vocational training in India, it was time to get to work. We have decided in a first step to offer the basic metal-working course. Building on this, solid dual vocational training oriented towards German quality standards is to be implemented. A vocational education committee was established, which develops the curriculum and selects a training provider. For this, a number of government institutions were also considered as partners. At the end of a comprehensive selection process, we decided for the 'Don Bosco' training facility on account of their excellent equipment, their well-educated trainers and their flexible approach. This institute is managed by the very dedicated Salesian Father Corlis Gonsalves and already cooperates successfully with German companies such as Bosch and Mercedes in Pune. Fr. Corlis deserves our heartfelt gratitude. In a straightforward approach, he quickly assisted us in the procurement of material and tools and made a considerable contribution to the successful completion of the project.

This made us realize the first challenge: if you want to train to German standards, you will need top-of-the-line equipment that does not really exist in any institutes in India. In addition, many tools are expensive because they have to be imported, such as the Japanese calipers the trainees work with. Therefore, we are now in talks with German tool makers in order to be able to equip trainees in India with German tools at a reasonable price.

The second, even bigger challenge, however, is the training of trainers: in India, there is still no state or private struc-



Great potential: number of German enterprises per sector at the AHK location Pune

ture organizing the training of trainers in close cooperation with companies and based on their requirements. There is still no Instructor Aptitude Ordinance (AEVO). That is why we hired a German senior expert to help introducing Don Bosco trainers to new training concepts. They were initially given a generic introduction to professional decision-making and responsibility in a two-day seminar. Throughout the entire pilot phase the senior expert now also supports the trainers as a mentor. The way in which this assistance was received exceeded our expectations: the trainers at Don Bosco have enthusiastically adopted the suggestions and the trainees are equally thrilled when asked for their own input and when discussing it in the group. Rahul Hipparkar, a trainee at Schaeffler India, even says, "I recommend the basic course to all trainees who train to work in a metal-working profession."

Of course, the challenges remain, but we are on the right path. By now, the AHK India is perceived as a competent partner in terms of vocational education and training. That is why today, backed up with good arguments and fully convinced, we can ask, "What if you don't train them and they stay?"

## Dual training is an investment in the future of the country

In early March in Pune, the metal-training pilot project started at the Don Bosco training facilities. For this, the AHK brought in the SES for support. We talked to Hermann Kuhlmann of the SES, former vocational school teacher, who supervised the project until the end of April.

*How were you introduced to the project?*

I was asked whether I could support VETnet and was immediately excited. Mr Stichel, my predecessor, had prepared the project and created the curriculum. He trained me for three days so that I could understand the interrelationships and implement them accordingly. I placed a two-day didactics and methodology seminar at the beginning to prepare the trainers for training. During the seminar, I presented the 'complete action model' to the trainers, which is used to teach German trainees occupational competence. It was important to me to enable the trainers to apply this model.

*What challenges did you encounter?*

For both trainers and trainees it is a new approach to get away from teacher-centred teaching and to adjust to a new and creative cooperation. Also, we had initial problems in finding the right tools, as well as the necessary materials for the workpieces. Because very few people speak English, the lessons are taught in Hindi or Marathi. Thus, we needed a translator who speaks German and English. Also the different education requirements were major challenges for us. Through additional lessons taught by teachers at Don Bosco, this problem was essentially mitigated.



Hermann Kuhlmann starts the practical training of apprentices with an introduction on how to handle standard tools

## SES – Senior Expert Service

Senior Expert Service (SES) is the Foundation of German Industry for International Cooperation – a German voluntary work and sending organization for retired experts and managers. The non-profit organization was founded in 1983 and is sponsored by the top associations of the German industry: BDA, BDI, DIHK and ZDH. In 2014, the SES registered 11,600 experts from more than 50 industry sectors, who conducted 4,300 missions in Germany and abroad.

*The pilot project will run for three months. What would you like to achieve in this relatively short time frame?*

We will familiarize the trainees with the basic skills of metal technology and enable them to work out solutions for the tasks of their professional field.

*What is the main difference between your work as a vocational school teacher in Germany and as a trainer here in India?*

The German school system differs considerably from the one in India. To begin with, there is the relatively uniform level of education of trainees. In Germany, vocational training has a long tradition and a very high priority. The industry recognizes the need for sound vocational education and is therefore very interested in investing in the future of employees. Accordingly, the equipment in schools and businesses is much better than here.

*What experiences were you able to gain?*

It is very difficult to implement a basic vocational education system in India, which compares to German standards. Manual labour is not very well-respected in Indian society, and there is also the complex administrative system. The separation of general education and vocational education proves to be unfavourable. That's why it's very important to tackle this challenge as soon as possible, even if only small steps are feasible at first.

*What are your wishes for the future of the project?*

In particular, I wish for the project to find many like-minded allies who have recognized that an investment in the professional education of our youth is a safe way to ensure the future of the country and of a business, and partners who are courageous enough to recognize that this investment cannot and does not have to be amortized over the period of only one fiscal year.

The interview was conducted by Sabine Kotsch



# VETNET IN ITALY

## Round tables are paving the way

By Prof Jacqueline May

In Italy, the German dual system of vocational training is considered to be the basis and example for a new direction of professional qualification. The practical content is to be significantly increased and companies in particular are to receive more responsibility for the training of young people.

Legislative competence and management authority for vocational training in Italy are not only with the central state, but for the most part in the regions. This introduces flexibility, but also means that there are 19 different regional regulations for one and the same profession. Vocational training can be completed after three or four years with a 'vocational qualification' but also after five years in combination with A-levels. However, vocational training in Italy is not highly regarded. In addition, the inconsistency of the various qualifications in the regional variations causes a lack of comparability and complexity, further constraining the appreciation for vocational training. This should change with the new dual vocational education model. The start of training courses for companies at vocational schools is scheduled for September 2015.

In this context, the Italian-German Chamber of Commerce (AHK Italy) brought together different relevant players and established various networks: the AHK organizes operational working groups, for example with business representatives, trade unions, vocational schools and education authorities. The individual results from these working groups are then brought together in a large committee.

The 'round table of heads of vocational schools' is particularly active. This committee aims at developing a model based on statutory provisions representing a ratio of 50 per cent each of theoretical and practical training and at the same time it defines the tasks and competences of the entire vocational training personnel. The AHK intensively supports the training of trainers, vocational school teachers and examiners and informs about the respective eligibility requirements. The AHK places special emphasis on uniform and comparable concepts and examinations in all regions. The proportion of practical education within vocational education and training does however still vary in size, which also means that the ratio of education in schools, training workshops and companies varies considerably - from profession to profession as well as from region to region.

Currently, the AHK Italy works primarily in the regions of Lombardy, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Piedmont, Veneto and Apulia. Soon, additional round tables are to be organized in Liguria, Sicily, Campania and Sardinia, where they will

bring together the same players of vocational training: state government, education authorities, companies, communities, schools and trade unions. So far, these bodies did not communicate much with one another, and now they are speaking the 'same language'.

The principle of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications has been in place in the regions since last year. However, the concrete implementation will require uniform parameters for job titles, job descriptions, framework curricula and examination regulations - an important approach for the work of the AHK.



The AHK Italy is active within the scope of the VETnet project in Italy's economically stronger northern as well as in the weaker southern regions

## Vocational training offers great jobs and independence

An interview with Prof Enrico Danili, former head of a vocational school, employee of the regional school authority and partner of the AHK Italy for the round tables with vocational schools in Lombardy



*Mr. Danili, please describe the current situation of vocational training in Lombardy.*

Surely Lombardy cannot be compared to Germany, but please allow me to say the following: in Lombardy, we are trailblazers in vocational training in Italy. The region has 30 recognized occupational profiles, the

average in the Italian regions is only at about 20. Many vocational schools are involved locally and develop projects together with the companies. Lombardy's goal is to orient vocational school towards work. We want 'una scuola fondata sul lavoro' - in English 'a school based on work'. There are already numerous initiatives for the development of vocational training.

*How did you come to join VETnet?*

I have been enthusiastic about vocational training for 30 years and have participated in hundreds of initiatives in Lombardy and throughout Italy. So it was only natural for me to come across the AHK Italy thanks to its commitment and dedication to vocational training. And that happened last year, after I had retired from the workforce. Right from the start it was clear that we had a common goal, and dual vocational training is the continuation of my path ...

*... to inspire schools for dual vocational training and to give young people a concrete perspective ...*

Exactly! And VETnet makes this possible! Currently, we have 15 vocational schools in and around Milan, which would like to begin with new dual classes in different fields in September: logistics, mechatronics, computer science, tourism, retail, woodworking industry etc. They are convinced of the importance of this system for Italy. The principle of taking into account the demand and needs of businesses is entirely new for vocational schools. Now young people will become part of the company and will train and learn in two different locations. What was previously a one- or two-week stay in a company now becomes comprehensive work experience. This is especially motivating. The VETnet activities are urgently required to bring together companies, schools and young people. An input by VETnet is important especially in the orientation phase.

*Who are your most important partners in this process?*

The dual system is still not well known in Italy. Therefore, we have taken on the role of an educator for students and families. We explain to them why the experience in the company is just as important as the lessons in the classroom. Thus, students and their families are important partners for us. But the most important partners are of course the companies and their trainers as well as the vocational schools, the regional education authorities and trade unions.

*What are the next steps?*

We want to involve these players even more to strengthen the consensus in society and to finally tackle youth unemployment.

*What are the biggest challenges?*

It is very important, and this is the mission of VETnet and the AHK, to promote the connection between schools and companies. They need to communicate and support each other better.

*What is your personal goal?*

I would like for the region to be more involved, because vocational training plays a key role in combating unemployment. My goal is to give young people new opportunities. Out of personal commitment and dedication I have contributed to the creation of a vocational school. I would like young people to find good jobs through dual vocational training and achieve independence.

The interview was conducted by Prof Jacqueline May

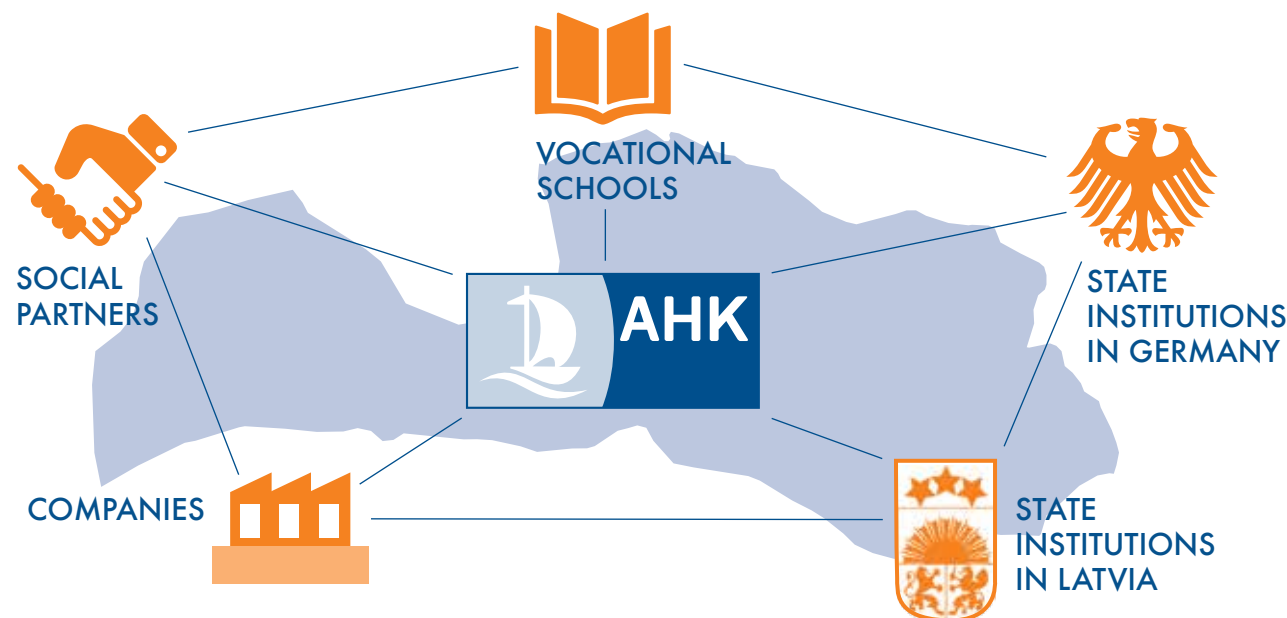
# VETNET IN LATVIA

## A Latvian-German joint initiative for forwarding companies

By Maren Diale-Schellschmidt and Ramona Neuse

For Latvia, one of the major transportation hubs in the Baltic states, the transportation and logistics sector is of great importance. Appropriately trained personnel, oriented towards practical knowledge, is, however, not sufficiently available. The VETnet project of the AHK Baltic States in Latvia therefore supports the Latvian pilot initiatives in work-based education with the introduction of a new dual

Unlike in Germany, vocational training programmes in Latvia are based on fixed occupational standards that are defined by national expert councils of the individual sectors (NEPs). In addition, Latvia is now working on standards for new training programmes that are based on the principle of modularization according to EU requirements. To make this process as effective as possible, the VETnet team first organized a joint meeting with the NEP for transportation and logistics and the working group for the preparation of training programmes in the field of transportation. In addition, two vocational schools from Riga and Liepāja as well as the National Centre for Education (VISC) were actively



The AHK Baltic States as a platform: the VETnet programme brings all relevant partners together in one network

vocational training programme. This initiative is carried out in close coordination with the Ministry of Education of Latvia and aims at providing skilled workers for the country's forwarding companies operating internationally.

So far the forwarding companies have been recruiting their skilled personnel out of a pool of university graduates who have little or no practical experience. Thus, the graduates go through an 'on-the-job training' in the company in order to be placed in skilled workers' positions. It is urgently necessary for this gap to be closed by means of a suitable vocational training profile. Together with member companies of the AHK in the forwarding sector, as a first step the VETnet team analyzed in detail the areas of responsibility of an employee in a Latvian forwarding company. Based on these results, an overview of the necessary knowledge and skills of employees working in a forwarding company was compiled and coordinated by the VETnet project team.

involved in the project from the start. Thus, the course for the new training module 'International transportation logistics' receiving national recognition was set. The training contents were formulated in the form of learning results and competences according to the Latvian methods and modules in regular talks and meetings. Finally, they were submitted to the VISC and the Latvian Ministry of Education and approved. All organizational details between vocational schools and companies were developed in close cooperation with the VETnet project. In addition, key points were the acquisition of further companies to take on trainees and, last but not least, interested high school graduates. Because this form of education is still new and unknown in Latvia, so far, graduates have applied for vocational training directly at a vocational school and not at a company. The new partnerships were also successful in this respect: with the support of the AHK, for the first time, companies and vocational schools are now jointly promoting a job profile, for example during open house days or 'speed datings' for forwarding companies. The occupational counsellors in public schools across

the country, still new in their positions, are also involved. In September 2015, the country's first-ever dual training course following the new modules standard will start featuring the job profile 'forwarding company employee': a Latvian-German collaboration into which all parties involved put

a lot of commitment and dedication and an achievement the AHK Latvia can be proud of. Because with this example of best practice it was proven that even a completely new training module is feasible.

## Together for Europe's youth

A conversation with Rudolf Brickenstein, Honorary President of the IHK Dortmund, Managing Director of Baltika Holz-industrie GmbH and co-owner of Lameko Impex SIA

*Mr. Brickenstein, why do you as an Honorary President of the IHK Dortmund commit yourself to dual vocational training in Latvia?*

In a united Europe, we need prospects for our youths, who are affected by high unemployment rates in some countries. The dual system has proven its value for decades in Germany and certainly contributed to the fact that youth unemployment is so low in Germany. Therefore it goes without saying for our company, who is a guest in Latvia, to offer our support directly and locally. I myself have started my professional career with vocational training as a skilled worker in a sawmill in November 1946.

*How can you together with the team of the IHK Dortmund support the VETnet projects?*

The executive committee, the plenum and the management of the IHK Dortmund are committed to the dedicated support of projects together with their contacts in Latvia and China. And when I travelled to the tenth anniversary of the AHK Baltic States in 2014, I was in the lucky position to deliver an invitation for a Latvian delegation from the president and chief executive officer of the IHK Dortmund to the state secretary of the Latvian Ministry of Education during the vocational education forum.

*From your perspective, what are the highlights of this cooperation?*

The AHK employee Diana Krastina visited Dortmund to get an overview of the diverse vocational training activities of an IHK. This included company visits with training consultants and the observation of a practical IHK examination in warehouse logistics. In return, Michael Ifland, IHK Director for vocational and continuing education visited Latvia and familiarized himself with the Latvian woodworking industry, among other things. However, the absolute highlight was the study trip of a Latvian delegation to Dortmund in November 2014 mentioned above. For several days the participants could experience dual vocational training live on-site. For this they visited smaller companies in their respective sectors, such as the IT partner of Borussia Dortmund, which has trainees for audio-visual media design. The responsible vocational schools and the vocational



Rudolf Brickenstein campaigns for dual vocational training in Latvia during an interview with the Latvian television channel TV7

information centre of the Federal Employment Agency were available for lively and interesting talks.

*What did the participants take with them from their trip to Dortmund?*

The results of the study trip were incorporated, for example, into one of the following workshops in Ogre. On the basis of Latvian best practices, such as the training of skilled electronics technicians at SIA Hanzas Elektronika, the participants discussed possible quality criteria for a national dual training system. Here I would like to quote Kaspars Kiris, head of the department for media art of the Riga school of crafts, "After one year, 'work-based learning' is no longer a crazy idea. The study trip to Dortmund and the exchange of experience with the VETnet project convinced me that a Latvia-specific dual vocational training is very well doable and is to be further developed."

*If you look into the future, what do you wish for in respect of the VETnet project?*

All good wishes come in threes. Firstly: good luck and much success for the well-being of youth in all participating countries. Secondly: VETnet will be further expanded and supported in the AHKs as the economically-oriented engine for dual vocational training. Thirdly: employees who continue to be so dedicated and committed!

The interview was conducted by Ramona Neuse



# VETNET IN PORTUGAL

## New solutions with best practices

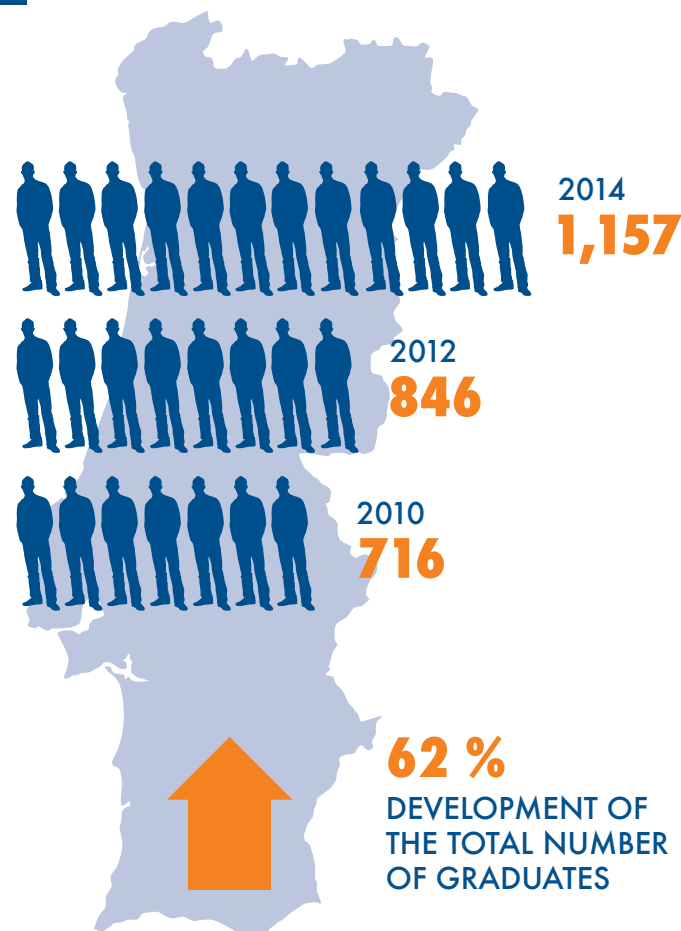
By Ilona Medrikat (GOVET) and Fátima Pires (AHK)

For over 60 years, the German-Portuguese Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Portugal) has been supporting German and Portuguese companies with a variety of business-related services. In doing so, it also continuously expanded its own training activities. The AHK maintains three education centres providing training according to the dual model and which are promoted by the Portuguese government. Its certifications are recognized by the Portuguese education system and highlighted as a good example in the current debate on reforms.

The activities carried out within the scope of VETnet focused on strengthening dialog with the various players of vocational education and training in Portugal and on deepening the understanding of the German dual system. These activities belong to the objectives that were defined by both education ministries. In this context, the cooperation between the AHK in Lisbon and GOVET (German Office for International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training) is of crucial importance.

The foundation for the success of the AHK-GOVET cooperation within the scope of VETnet had already been laid in November 2013 at a meeting in Berlin during which the AHK and GOVET jointly analyzed and discussed the different VETnet modules for Portugal. Subsequently, there was a continuous exchange regarding the project itself and fundamental questions of dual vocational training in connection with the reforms of the vocational education system initiated in Portugal.

Successful cooperation was already accomplished in the first VETnet module 'Train-the-Trainer'. For this, relevant players of vocational training were identified; and the different versions of the Portuguese vocational education



The AHK Portugal as an active participant in the vocational training process: the number of graduates at the three training locations of the Chamber (Lisbon, Porto, Portimão) nearly doubled between 2010 and 2014

model and of the German dual system were discussed with them. As a result, an analysis of the different job profiles of corporate trainers in four models of vocational education was developed together with the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Training (ANQEP) and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP).

As part of this result, an independent project was developed, supported by all Portuguese players and promoted through GOVET by the BMBF under the umbrella of the bilateral working group. This project to develop 'qualification modules for corporate training staff in Portugal' was agreed upon at a conference in Lisbon and defined in its main features and outline. Afterwards, GOVET and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) finalized its composition; the project was executed in cooperation with the AHK Portugal and the Portuguese partners.

For this, the AHK assembled a project team with knowledge of the languages and the education systems of both

countries. Thus, it took on the role of a mediator between the two cultures of learning and working. GOVET coordinated the overall project, the BIBB with its expertise was responsible for the conceptual design and the scientific supervision. As a result, a qualification measure with five modules for educational didactic training for corporate trainers could be presented. Not least due to the positive experiences during the close cooperation within the scope of this project, the support and supervision of GOVET were subsequently applied in other areas of the VETnet project. For example, study trips to Germany were organized in cooperation with GOVET.

The first of these study trips took place in November 2014. The Portuguese feedback was so positive that we conducted a second study trip with Portuguese journalists in May 2015. At the end of June, the VETnet-AHK vocational education congress took place in Lisbon. It brought together

## "I am proud of my vocational training"

Ana Teixeira, 18, completed her vocational training in the Centro DUAL in Porto, one of three AHK training centres in Portugal, and at the car dealership 'Sociedade Comercial C. Santos' in Maia. She completed training as an office administrator in February 2015.



*Why did you decide on training in one of the DUAL centres?*

A friend told me about the vocational education centre. He said that it was very sophisticated and that it offered many training opportunities. I wanted to do an apprenticeship, in which I would acquire a diploma from a secondary school and also a professional certification. For me, secondary school was not geared enough towards an occupation. The fact that I will have better chances of finding a job after completion of the training convinced me.

*How did you perceive the AHK Portugal during your training?*

I was able to contact the AHK at any time if there were any problems or challenges during the training. To know that there is reliable support in addition to the company itself gave me confidence.

*What experiences were you able to gain during your vocational training?*

I liked the practical training in the company best: the various experiences I gained in the various departments of the company, for example at reception, in customer service or carrying out general office tasks. In the vocational training centre, for the theoretical part of the training, the best thing was that I could take part

er government representatives and social partners from both countries in an intensive dialog on the subject of dual vocational training. About 250 participants from politics and industry, trade unions and educational institutions attended the event, including the ministers of the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Labour as well as the German Education Minister Johanna Wanka.

In Portugal, we were successful in coordinating the German activities on vocational training and in creating maximum synergy effects. The main strengths of the cooperation were the formulation of common objectives, the creation of responsibilities and the appointment of contact persons who coordinated the activities on a regular basis. Without merely copying the German example, sensible solutions for the Portuguese vocational education system could be found in this way.

## The DUAL centres

Since 1983, the AHK Portugal has been in the position of a trainer in two training centres in Lisbon and Porto. Currently, in both centres technical professions are trained in addition to commercial education. In 1999, a third training centre was established in Portimão in the Algarve region. It places the focus on activities in the tourism industry and instructs trainees in professions such as cook or hotel and catering specialist. Since 2007, DUAL is a registered trademark of AHK vocational training in Portugal.

in four different seminars of 'Transportes & Negócios' (transportation & commercial activities). Also, I was proud to represent my training company as a trainee during the open house.

*What opportunities do you see for yourself after the completion of your training?*

After graduating, I was hired by my training company. The diploma from a secondary school, which I also obtained, will additionally enable me to pursue a college degree while working full time in September.

*Would you also recommend dual training to your friends?*

Yes, most definitely. Training geared specifically to the needs and interests of a business is less general than in schools of general education and much more practical. It offers better opportunities for employment or for studying after completion of vocational training.

The interview was conducted by Fátima Pires



Aspiring chefs of the DUAL centre Portimão receive instructions for the next cooking course

# VETNET IN RUSSIA

## Start of the first cooperation for dual vocational training

By Detlev Freyhoff

In Russia, the project of dual vocational training fits in with the president's initiative nicely, through which more than 25 million jobs are to be created for highly skilled personnel by 2020. The German-Russian Chamber of Commerce (AHK Russia) therefore works closely together with the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI), the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (MON), the Federal Institute for Education Development (FIRO), as well as individual oblast administrations. The AHK Russia entered into contractual agreements with the ASI for cooperation in five pilot regions.

The current development is quite positive: initially, the department of vocational training was created in the AHK. In addition, the selection, design and launch of dual training programmes went ahead in pilot projects; corresponding project agreements were signed. Furthermore, the standardized 'Train-the-Trainer' courses for trainers in companies were conducted. With this, the first training within the scope of VETnet could finally start in the training year 2014/2015: mechatronics technician (BauTex in Gus Khrustalny), specialist for warehouse logistics (KCA Deutag in Tyumen), call centre agent (Arvato-Bertelsmann in Yaroslavl), baker/pastry chef/cook (Hyperglobus in the Moscow oblast) as well as butcher (Hyperglobus and Selgros in the Moscow oblast).

In the second phase, current pilot projects are to be supported together with a system of quality assurance for vocational education and training in the AHK is to be established. In addition, more pilot projects in sought-after occupations are planned until September 2015. VETnet can celebrate its first successes in Russia, but dual vocational training is still facing great challenges. These can be dealt with successfully. However, this requires the focused work by all relevant partners: companies, colleges and government. Cross-company bodies to develop appropriate job descriptions and uniform standards are a prerequisite for demand-oriented training.

At the same time, in terms of their material and technical standards, colleges should align themselves to the new vocational professions and train their teachers according to the modern standards of new apprenticeships. On the part of the government, it would also help if the parameters for the provision and qualification of training personnel in the companies and the creation of new training places were improved.

In addition, all partners must try together to improve the poor image vocational training has. Currently, 73 per cent of graduates attend a college or a university, compared to 27 per cent who graduate from a vocational school - a clear and undesirable development of the labour market.

The AHK will also make a contribution: in 2015, the contacts to the competent Russian authorities will be intensified. In doing so, the content of teaching and training plans in the pilot projects are to be compared with the (new) Russian standards. The AHK provides consulting expertise to its Russian partners for the preparation of examination regulations, the execution of examinations and issues regarding certification. The AHK is also in close contact about the preparation of vocational training contracts in future.

Although the challenges seem enormous: large Russian industrial companies such as Saturn, Chelpipe or R-Pharm and German companies are also very active in the area of vocational training. For example, seven dual training courses were introduced at the Volkswagen plant in Kaluga in 2010 alone. These are currently still isolated applications, as is training within the scope of VETnet. But the course was set for a strong system of dual vocational training.

The territorial state of the Russian Federation: a challenge for the AHK in terms of controlling regional pilot projects



## "We recognize those undergoing dual vocational training by the way they work"

An interview with Dr Ekaterina Esenina, researcher at FIRO

*The VETnet project aims at initiating pilot projects in the field of vocational education and training with the participation of German and Russian companies. What role can FIRO play in this project?*

In many areas, we are in intense talks with the AHK and the participating companies. We share our expertise and incorporate the experiences of the companies in our work. Our theoretical approach is complemented, confirmed or critically questioned by the practical experience of the companies. It is clear that a system of dual vocational training cannot be established in one day and that we have to overcome obstacles in our path. We are happy to advise companies which are new to vocational training, and we provide them with the documents we prepared.

*To what extent do you rely on the know-how of German institutions when it comes to your vocational education activities?*

A focal point of our collaboration with the AHK is the training of trainers in the companies. In June 2014, the first training course was conducted under the guidance of the AHK and its partners from Germany, which we complemented in the autumn by adding a second module regarding Russian law. After successful completion of both components, the participants received an appropriate certificate.

In addition, together with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) we are working on a manual for the training of trainers, which corresponds to the Russian conditions, and for this purpose we are collecting the experiences of companies in the VETnet project.

Independent examinations are another important issue. In this regard, a new approach is currently being discussed in Russia, which is to enter Russian legislation soon. For this, we also build on the experiences of German companies and will include examination questions already used for certain professions, for example.

*What are the next steps in the cooperation between FIRO and the AHK?*

On the actual work level the cooperation should be intensified further. A good start was the meeting of the vocational education committee of the AHK at the beginning of April this year, which was attended by all companies and vocational schools involved in the committee. There, the specific requirements of the companies were defined. At the same time we were able to explain to the companies what input we expect from them. The supermarket chain Globus, for example, expressed at the start of the project that it wants to provide training for certain professions



Welding has to be learned - at the Bosch production site

for the Globus supermarkets in the Moscow region. At the moment, training courses are given in cooperation with a vocational college for a total of eleven trainees. Even at this relatively early stage, the Globus employees can already see the difference between those trained in the dual education system and the trainees taught according to the old model of education. The former are much better organized, more disciplined and motivated than the group of those who trained in the old system. That is also reflected in the significantly better results of the midterm examinations.

In addition, upon request from the training company we are planning an expansion of the range of professions offered in vocational training: already in the next school year, the training course for the retail specialist profession is to start in cooperation with another vocational school in the Moscow region.

A number of events are planned for this year, during which we will provide information about dual vocational training and offer workshops for companies together with the AHK and other partners, such as the Russian trade associations. Central issues are the acquisition of medium-sized Russian companies for vocational training and international comparison with other countries such as China or Slovakia, both of which have also introduced the dual system.

The interview was conducted by Katharina Schöne

### FIRO

The Federal Institute for Educational Development (FIRO) in Moscow is a think-tank dealing with issues around general, academic, vocational and continuing education. The Firo is under the control of the Ministry of Education and Science (MON) of the Russian Federation. Since 2011, the Firo cooperates with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) on the development of vocational training institutions, the qualification of training personnel as well as the development of a vocational training portal.



# VETNET IN SLOVAKIA

## AHK and companies united for dual vocational training

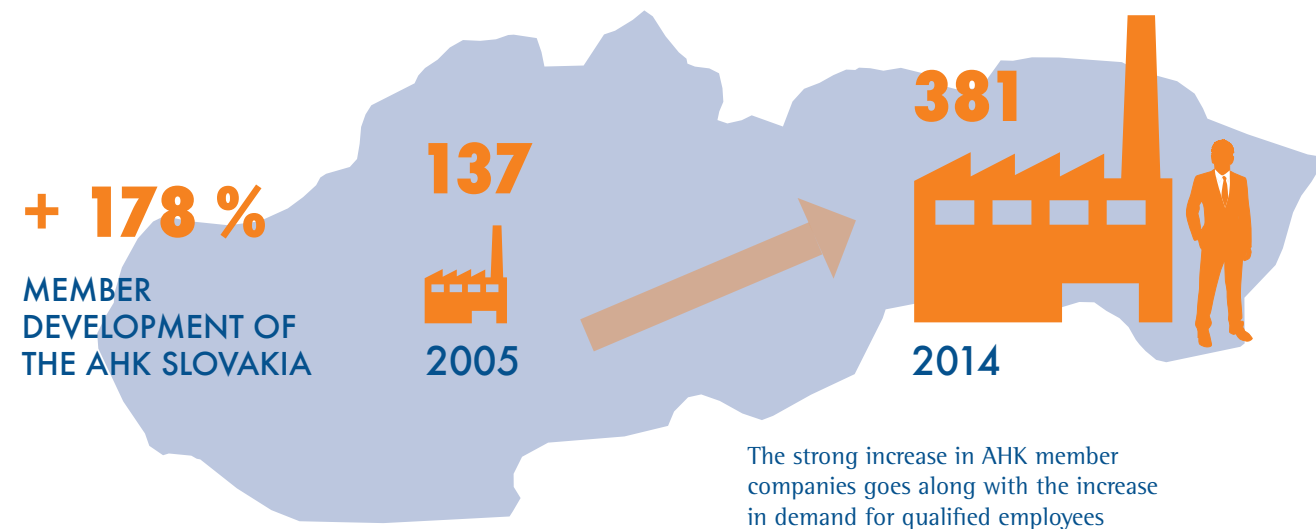
By Dr Guido Glania

Since the launch of VETnet in September 2013, the issue of dual vocational training in Slovakia made a quantum leap: although initially it was a little-noticed niche topic, the government has now put the dual system at the top of the agenda with a much-publicized law reform.

As it is the standard in Central Europe, the Slovakian secondary education system was mainly focused on academic education. Practical experiences were to be gained mainly in the schools' own workshops or in occasional internships at partner companies. Moreover, the

As many companies are planning to expand and invest, the lack of skilled workers has become a key issue for the industry by now. Therefore, with its vocational training programme, the AHK was literally kicking in open doors of many HR managers. The AHK and the companies agreed on promoting technical professions together. The AHK also received strong backing by the companies for a pilot project for the dual training system.

These activities were complemented by political measures: by now, the government had also recognized the undesirable development in the labour market and was determined to counter it. The dual system was identified as a way to qualify young people according to company requirements while applying a practical approach. This led to an intensive dialogue between the AHK and the Ministry of



industry had no viable way of communicating its needs and to control vocational training. Curricula were also largely created without involving companies.

So it is not surprising that in recent years the gap between professional qualifications and company requirements has steadily grown. Not only the quality of vocational training - far from real working life, with obsolete technology and overly focused on theory - but also the number of graduates indicated an alarmingly negative development. While the number of vocational students declined dramatically in recent years, more and more young people pushed their way into secondary schools and universities. This led to a deteriorating employment situation for many academics. Youth unemployment is at over 30 per cent.

Education. Apart from giving specialist advice the AHK also found itself in the position of supporting the government in its reform plans for good publicity, because there were reservations not only in vocational schools, but also in economic circles. Following the creation of a legal basis for dual training in the spring of 2015 things should get moving quickly now. The first dual training courses are already planned for September 2015. There are still some obstacles to overcome. But we have a start.

## "Rethinking has begun"

A conversation with Dr Guido Glania, member of the Executive Board of the German-Slovak Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Slovakia)



*With VETnet, the AHK Slovakia is getting involved with dual vocational training for the first time. What kind of challenges did you encounter during this process?*

In the initial phase, we focused on building expertise and establishing partnerships with experts.

Vocational training is a very challenging field, but we were able to dive into the operational process quickly, thanks especially to our partnership with the IHK Koblenz. However, a major challenge was working with the term 'dual training'. Although in Slovakia this term has been used for many years, it primarily refers students' occasional internships at companies. Obviously, misunderstandings were thus inevitable.

*The AHK has many German member companies, including automobile manufacturers and their suppliers. What conclusion do you draw from conversations with corporate leaders on the subject of vocational training?*

For most companies, securing a skilled workforce is a difficult task. Managers know that their companies must get active and that the government alone cannot provide a solution. Therefore, the willingness to invest in young people is relatively high. However, cost pressures must not be underestimated. The fact that companies have been providing vocational training in Germany for many years is very useful, so parent companies have experience and adequate structures in place.

*Vocational training has a bad reputation in Slovakia. The Chamber is responding with its image campaign 'fit4future'. What exactly is it about?*

As in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe, vocational training is also seen as a temporary solution for those who do not manage to get into university in Slovakia. At the same time, only a few university graduates find an occupation that corresponds to their qualifications. With 'fit4future' we show students, parents and teachers alike that companies have a high demand for technically trained skilled workers, even in regions where youth unemployment is high. We make it clear that modern industrial companies offer a secure and attractive high-tech working environment. We did in fact succeed in initiating a social discourse on the future of the education system. The number of expert conferences, TV debates and newspaper reports on this issue is now huge.

## The new Vocational Training Act

On 12 March 2015 the Slovakian Parliament passed the new Vocational Training Act. In the new dual system in which training can have a duration of three or five years (with or without A-levels), the employer is involved in both the content of teaching and the financial costs. The portion of in-company training is between 50 and 80 per cent. With the new school year starting on 1 September 2015 the first year of training in the dual system will also start.

*Even politicians have responded to this development and have passed a law on vocational education. How did the VETnet activity of the AHK contribute to this?*

The government actively included us in the discussions on the design of the law. Our credibility is high because we have built the necessary expertise on the issue and because we have practical experience from pilot activities. This would have been impossible without VETnet. Our clear vote for dual vocational training encouraged the government to overcome resistance in the industry and in the schooling system.

*What future opportunities do you see for the project?*

The government is pinning its hopes on the fact that our pilot activities will help implementing dual training courses. But the implementation of the dual training system will not happen by itself; there is still a lot of convincing left to do. However, on the one hand successful graduates will attract more young people to the dual training system and be successful pioneers, and on the other hand they will certainly motivate more companies and schools to join the dual system.

High visibility and high expectations of course mean great responsibility for the pilot projects. But we are convinced that dual vocational training can be successfully established here.

Rethinking has begun.

The interview was conducted by Reiner Valier

# VETNET IN SPAIN

## There is substantial interest in well-founded vocational training

By Tanja Nause

The German dual vocational training is regarded as a model today – internationally and also in Spain: in 2012, in an effort to combat the high youth unemployment in the long term, the Spanish government enabled dual vocational training by way of law. Many of Spain's autonomous regions then started to implement this form of training in pilot projects. The German-Spanish Chamber of Commerce (AHK Spain) has advised numerous Spanish and German companies on the implementation of dual training in Spain. Areas for improvement have been identified regarding a closer interlocking of theory and practical phases, a more intensive cooperation between training companies and vocational training schools, the higher level of comparability of vocational training qualifications, a period of training extended to three years, the transfer of company-specific teaching contents to the trainees and an improved training of trainers.

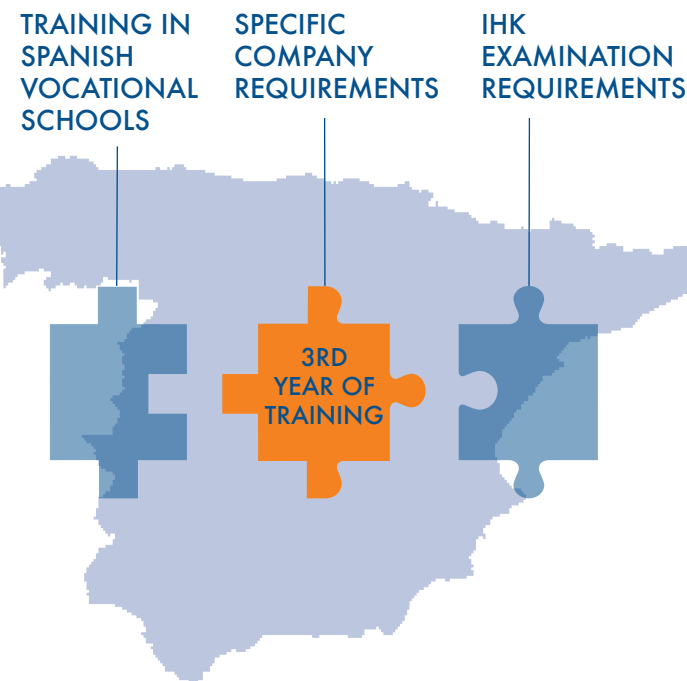
As an example for the various training projects the AHK Spain initiated within the scope of VETnet, one project is to be presented here in more detail.

### *Dual training for mechatronics technicians at the Comunidad de Madrid*

With the training companies Siemens, SaarGummi and Aersen, the AHK Spain started an alternative dual training project on 1 April 2015.



Women in a male domain – more and more young women in Spain are also attracted to technical professions requiring vocational training



VETnet and the AHK Spain as a link: a third year of training provides business-specific expertise and closes the gap between the training contents of the Spanish vocational schools and the requirements for the successful passing of the IHK examination

The project is based on classic Spanish vocational training, but at the end of the training period trainees are taken on by the companies. In an additional third year, the trainees receive technically sound training following a corporate training plan which is based on German standards and introduced to company-specific contents. At the end of their vocational training, they take the German IHK examination.

### *Vocational education committee and training of trainers*

Within the scope of VETnet, the AHK Spain established a vocational education committee in April 2014. 15 representatives from leading training companies and vocational schools advise the AHK Spain on the implementation of high-quality dual vocational training in regular meetings. A further focus of AHK Spain activities is the organization of high-quality training of trainers. In September 2014, the AHK organized the first 'Train-the-Trainer' seminar in Madrid, which was

attended by 14 corporate trainers. In 2015, the AHK Spain will organize more than six courses for the training of trainers including the corresponding examination.

### *Outlook*

From the experiences of the AHK Spain in the VETnet projects, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is great interest from German and Spanish companies in sound vocational and continuing education. On that note, the AHK Spain will continue to work on establishing the German quality standard of a three-year vocational training course with IHK certification and the quality seal of the passed 'training of trainers' examination in the long term in Spain.

## "Vocational training creates identification"

A conversation with Eugenio Soria Gutiérrez, HR manager at Siemens, S.A.



*What does dual vocational training mean for a country like Spain?*

In Spain, we have extremely high youth unemployment. Undoubtedly, high-quality vocational training, recognized in the industry, is an effective tool to remedy such a situation. Spain is a leader in Europe when it comes to university graduates, but unfortunately also when it comes to unemployment. I am convinced that a decisive development of the dual system of vocational training will help young people to enter working life and improve the country's competitiveness.

*What are the major challenges in regard to the implementation of a dual system in Spain? What has been achieved so far?*

The Spanish vocational education system is not rooted in the economy to the same extent as the German dual system. The result is that graduates are limited in entering working life. Within the scope of dual vocational training, the trainee is integrated into the company right from the start, teaching contents are tailored to the needs of the company. Thus, assuming adequate performance, the trainee will already be recognized as future potential for the company during his training course. The Spanish authorities have been working on the introduction of the dual model for a couple of years. I think there is still a lack of willingness to support this kind of training on all parts, not least on the part of the private sector.

### FEDA

Since the beginning of the 1980s, FEDA (Formación Empresarial dual Alemana), the German foreign vocational school which is recognized by the standing conference of the German ministers of education and cultural affairs has been training industrial business management assistants and forwarding specialists in Madrid and Barcelona according to the 'German model'. In 2012, FEDA included 'retail specialist' in the training programme. The AHK Spain advises and supports FEDA regarding all vocational training courses and conducts the German IHK examinations. So far, approx. 2,000 graduates completed vocational training at FEDA.

*Why did you look for a dual training model in your company?*

As a company of German origin, we have implemented the concept of the dual vocational training system in Spain for decades. At the beginning, this was only possible within the company, but later it could also be done in cooperation with the AHK Spain and various other companies in the same way as it is done in Germany, including the recognized qualification. So far, this only applies to commercial professions; the training in the classroom is done by the FEDA (see info box). We are currently working on the expansion of the concept to technical professions such as mechatronics technician.

The advantages of dual training are obvious: it promotes identification with the company and corporate culture right from the start and helps gaining practical knowledge. The company-internal final examination is complemented by the recognition of the training qualification by the AHK Spain. Last but not least, dual vocational training abroad offers the opportunity of multilingual completion.

*You are also the Chairman of the Vocational Education Committee of the AHK Spain. Why are you committed to dual training in Spain beyond the interests of your company?*

I myself have completed in-house vocational training from 1977 to 1979, and I am fully convinced of the exceptional importance of such dual training, both for personal and professional development. In addition, well-functioning dual training is also believed to be essential for the 'health' of our national and international competitiveness.

The interview was conducted by Tanja Nause



VETNET IN THAILAND

The dual vocational training should always also be seen as a possible step towards university education

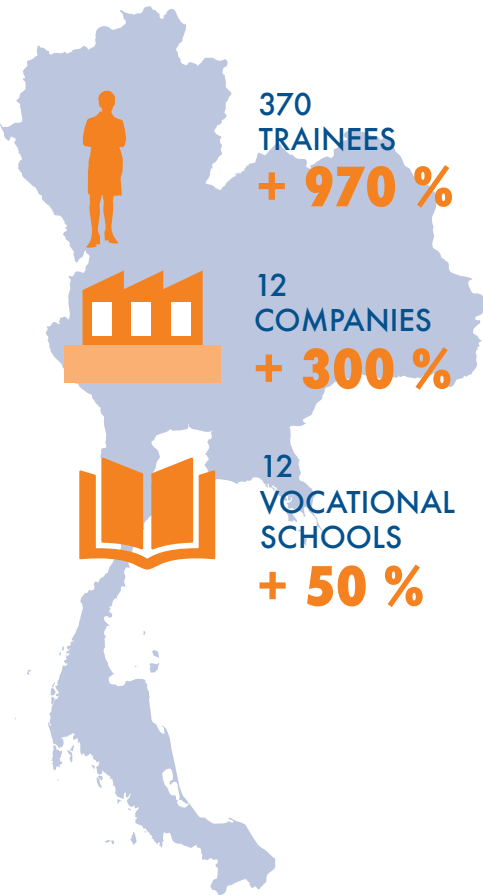
In January 2015, Volker Rieke, head of the department 'European and international cooperation in education and research' of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) visited the German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (AHK Thailand) to gain an impression of the activities with- in the scope of the VETnet project and received information about specific steps by the AHK Thailand to implement the VETnet project.

In addition, on this occasion, Mr. Rieke also signed a bilat- eral memorandum of understanding between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Thailand, in which a closer cooperation in the field of dual vocational training was agreed upon. Knowledge transfer, systemat- ic exchange at the governmental and institutional level and the setting up of pilot projects are the focus. On the part of Thailand, the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) will act as a partner and will assist in the implementation of planned training and qualification measures. A conversation about impressions from the trip.

The AHK Thailand has been active in the area of vocational education and training for some time. With its German- Thai programme of dual excellence education (GTDEE), which emphasizes the advantages of dual vocational train- ing, the AHK Thailand offers a good basis for further activ- ities within the scope of VETnet. However, implementation requires political support from both sides: from Thailand as well as Germany. What are the next steps?

Vocational training measures call for broad support - from politicians and also from relevant institutions. In this context, we had intensive talks with the Federal Institute for Vocation- al Education (BIBB) and its Thai counterpart OVEC in order to coordinate the interests of both sides. On the government level, we also regularly conduct discussions and consultations. We look at the issue of vocational education as a cross-cutting issue, where both sides can learn from each other. We should of course not transfer the German dual vocational training system to Thailand one-to-one. Both sides must carefully check which elements can be introduced in a way that makes sense. In doing so, we must also not forget the specific requirements of the companies that will eventually support and conduct the training. In order to succeed, vocational training programme must be tailored to the needs of these companies.

Is achieving uniform national standards a goal in vocational training in Thailand?



With the start of the VETnet activities of the AHK Thailand in 2013, vocational education activities could be strengthened and the pool of network partners could be expanded significantly

As an essential characteristic of the dual system, together with the Thai side, we certainly strive for something resem- bling a comprehensive national standard but will have to start first with individual pilot projects to be realistic. Through the GTDEE project of the AHK Thailand, training for a series of important occupations is already underway, for example for the job profiles of mechatronics techni- cian and electronics technician. We can certainly build on this and try to set up pilot projects with German and Thai companies in these areas that show the qualities of dual vocational training. Within the scope of VETnet, there are currently similar pilot projects in ten other states. We share the experiences that we manage to gain with all partners involved.

According to your observation, what are the greatest chal- lenges in the other countries of the VETnet project?

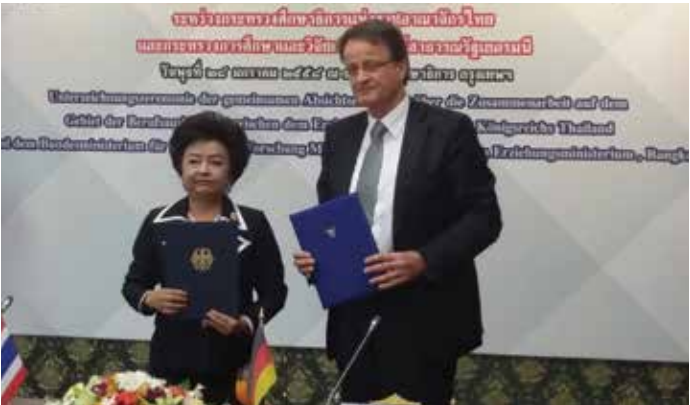
In most countries, in particular the bad reputation of

vocational training represents an obstacle. While about 40 per cent of all young people in Germany opt for vocation- al training in a company, this percentage is significantly lower in most of the partner countries. Vocational training is considered to be inferior, something that will get your hands dirty, but it is not seen as a high-quality training giving you the opportunity to find a well-paying job in the end. This is very different in countries such as Germany or Switzerland.

Dual vocational training should always also be seen as a possible step towards university education, as permea- bility of the educational systems is a key element for the acceptance of dual training. Moreover, companies' attitudes towards vocational training are important - there are also significant differences in perception in this area: training should generally be considered as an investment, thus as something that costs money initially, but pays off in the future. This approach must assert itself even more in Thai- land's economy. But I do think that Thailand is ready and able to rethink.

Should stronger government incentives be used in this context in order to win over companies regarding the remu- neration of trainees?

That should not be necessary. In Germany, for example, there are no government incentives, the companies there are rather well-aware of the benefits of their vocational training programmes: at the end, these companies receive highly qualified employees who are trained according to a predefined standard. And exactly these standards represent



State Secretary Dr Suthasri Wongsamarn in the Thai Education Ministry and Director Volker Rieke of the BMBF at the signing of the MoU

the promise to deliver. A trained graduate usually has clearly defined skills and know-how that can be used anywhere in the respective industry sector. This is a significant advan- tage, for which companies are willing to invest in the entire training.

One of the first major objectives has to be to increase the acceptance of vocational training, both among the young people to be trained and the companies, which are to provide training. We will have to work on this together; and the pilot projects within the scope of VETnet can provide a great foundation.

The interview was conducted by Philipp Dreher

Benjamas Reun-Nak, 19, Samut Prakarn Technological College (SAP), second year of training, Mercedes-Benz

“I chose the dual programme to have a better chance of finding a job after completion of the programme. Now I am completing a portion of my training at a Mercedes-Benz dealer in Ladprao. I am the only girl in the second year of training, there are many more in the upcoming training course. The dual system has gained in popularity among students.”

Jessada Cheundee, 19, Chonburi Technical College, B.Grimm

“I believe that dual vocational training is like a real job. My mother supports me because she thinks that I will learn to take on more responsibility through dual training.”

Supoj Daengkap, 19, Eastern Technological College (E-Tech), first year of training, Mercedes-Benz

“Before the start of training at Mercedes-Benz, I participated in an English language course for one month. I learned everyday basics but also technical terms. I’m completing my vocational training five days a week; on Sundays I attend school. I have completed technical training and believe that I now have a sound basis for the dual training.”

1 What is VETnet?

VETnet stands for German Chambers worldwide network for cooperative work-based Vocational Education and Training and promotes pilot projects in the field of dual vocational training in eleven cooperation countries of the German government.

2 Who finances VETnet?

The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

3 What are the partner countries?

The partner countries are on the one hand six European countries, with which the BMBF has vocational education cooperation programmes (Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain) and on the other hand five emerging economies (Brazil, China, India, Russia and Thailand).

4 What is the duration of the project?

The first phase of the project covers a period of two years. The project started in October 2013 and will end in September 2015.

5 What is the role of the DIHK?

The DIHK coordinates the AHKs that participate in the project and supports the country-specific project by providing expertise in the area of vocational training export.

6 Is the 'German model' transferred one-to-one?

Each country has different requirements, this applies particularly in the area of vocational training and continuing education. A one-to-one adoption of the 'German model' is neither desired nor required. In cooperation with its local partners, VETnet seeks appropriate ways of introducing elements of dual vocational training. These should focus on country-specific requirements.

7 How can I participate in VETnet as a German company?

If you would like to implement projects of dual vocational training alone or together with partners in one of the VETnet countries, you should contact the responsible AHK. There, you will be provided with background information and information on ways to participate in the projects.

8 Where can I get more information about the project?

For specific information you may contact the respective contact person at the AHKs in the respective countries. The VETnet team in Berlin is also happy to answer any general questions.

9 Does VETnet also help finding a place for training?

VETnet focuses on supporting local companies - this includes German as well as local businesses. Local, qualified skilled workers are to be trained based on the needs of these companies. Finding training positions is not part of the project.

10 To what extent do vocational training activities of the AHKs also take place in non-VETnet countries?

The DIHK, IHKs and AHKs support German companies worldwide in the qualification and training of their workforce. This task is not limited to the VETnet project countries. Vocational training experts at the DIHK and at the majority of the 130 AHK locations across the world are happy to provide more information and support.

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