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Strategic Programme of the Baltic Sea Academy

Promotion of Dual Systems of Vocational Education

0. Background

The Hanse-Parlament – an association of 50 chambers of commerce from all the Baltic Sea Region states – and the Baltic Sea Academy – an association of 17 colleges/universities from 9 Baltic Sea Region states – conduct the project “Future perspective: One-year Professional Qualification (Hamburg Model)” within the Life Long Learning Programme in cooperation with chambers, universities and other educational institutions. The model of one-year vocational education in the dual system had been developed and successfully implemented in Hamburg for young people with special support needs. It integrates these young people better into the vocational education, makes their career choice more secure, lowers the drop-out rates and significantly increases the chances on the labour market. The one-year vocational qualification can be recognised as the first year of vocational education, when thereafter the vocational education can be continued in the regular dual system.

In framework of this project, the Hamburg Model is transferred to Lithuania and Hungary, adapted to region and country specific conditions and implemented in these both countries. In addition, the possibilities of future implementations are examined extensively in Latvia, Norway and Poland. All the project results will be transferred to all members of the Hanse-Parlament and the Baltic Sea Academy. These chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and colleges/universities promote the future implementation of dual vocational training in general and the Hamburg Model specifically. The present strategic programme pursues the dissemination of the dual systems of vocational training in as many regions and countries of the Baltic Sea Region as possible.

1. Assignment of Tasks

Vocational education has lost much of its attractiveness over the last years. Especially in the so called new EU Member States (e.g. Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) with predominantly school-based vocational education, the participation in the vocational education is low; it has even dropped to an alarmingly low level, and is perceived by many young people as a dead end. In some countries e.g. Lithuania one or two-year courses are often conducted within the school-based vocational training, which open to young people a faster entry to the labour market with higher earning potential but by no means qualify them sufficiently and rather increase youth unemployment. There are usually only short internships in enterprises, so that work-based learning is very limited. The result is the unemployment of 15 – 24-year-olds in Lithuania, Latvia and Poland at the level of 28 – 30%. Insufficient professional qualification leads to long-term unemployment of youth, which for example for people



Hanse-Parlament



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

**BALTIC SEA
ACADEMY**

with only primary and lower secondary education, is at the level of 20% in Poland, 28% in Latvia, and 40% in Lithuania.

In some countries, up to 15 % of school leavers cannot start vocational training, have to wait in long queues or receive no professional training at all and are quickly bound to be unemployed. Up to 30% of young people, who begin vocational education, break it completely or change the profession.

At the same time, enterprises complain about the lack of skills of graduates. Vocational training at schools can meet only limited needs of the labour market and takes into account the qualification requirements of enterprises inadequately. The students do not learn the daily routine at a working environment sufficiently and the increasingly important personal and social skills can be taught in the classroom in a very limited way. According to a survey conducted by the Baltic Sea Academy in enterprises in Lithuania 70% of the SMEs need additional professionals whom they can attract in a very limited way or cannot attract at all. 96% of the SMEs want a better practical training and 74% a better theoretical training.

As a result of demographic changes, the number of school leavers in all the Baltic Sea Region states is decreasing, with the exception of Sweden. By 2030, the number of employees at the age of 15 – 44 will decrease by up to 25%. In most countries there already exists a shortage of skilled workers, which will have a more significant impact in the future, and will strikingly limit the developments. At the same time, we can observe alarmingly high youth unemployment, especially due to the lack/shortage of professional qualification.

SMEs threaten to become losers in the competition for qualified young staff. Due to a lack of qualified employees, innovation level is already much lower than it actually might and should be. The lack of young entrepreneurs, managers and professionals limits the growth of the SMEs the most. The improvement of qualifications with the simultaneous removal of the shortage of skilled workers are the most important support tasks and the key to sustainably strengthen the innovations, competitiveness and growth in SMEs in the Baltic Sea Region.

Against this background, it is of vital importance to emphasise

- a) the integration of young people and reduction of youth unemployment as well as
- b) the provision of qualified employees for SMEs and a significant reduction of the shortage of skilled workers in generally.

The German system of dual vocational training, which leads to a comparatively low youth unemployment, integrates enterprises responsibly in the provision of junior staff as well as connects vocational education much better with the requirements of the labour market, can make very large contributions with a lasting impact to the achievement of objectives. However, the German system cannot be misunderstood



as a “patent model”, which must be simply transferred. An adaptation to the respective regional/national conditions is always mandatory. Nevertheless, the basic principles of the dual model should be maintained to the greatest possible extent; “work-based learning” that consists of more or less short periods of internship in enterprises is by no means sufficient. Therefore, the present strategic programme by colleges and universities includes high-level objectives in as many regions and countries of the Baltic Sea Region as possible:

- a) to sustainably promote the implementation of the adapted systems of dual vocational education as well as dual bachelor's degree programmes, which combine professional education or work with studies.
- b) to sustainably support the implementation of the adapted Hamburg Model with a greatly improved integration of young people in vocational education as well as reduce youth unemployment.
- c) to provide qualified staff and thus also promote innovation and competitiveness in SMEs.

2. Action Programme “Hamburg Model”

Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education in Hamburg developed this professional qualification and has been using it for the last five years. It is a proven method to integrate young people into professional education, who cannot find vocational training opportunity. While or after one year of learning the students can continue with regular dual professional education.

The training begins with classes at the respective vocational school for few weeks. Then, the participating students pass different company and school based learning phases. The young people receive intensive advising, learn about enterprises and different professions, choose a professional training and get the corresponding training opportunity.

The “entry phase” in vocational training by the Hamburg Model is provided up to one year, after that the young people continue their regular education in the chosen profession. The first year can be credited to the entire training period. The teaching and learning contents match those of the first year of training in the dual system of vocational education.

The involved colleges and universities (see section 6.1) sustainably promote the future implementations of the Hamburg Model for the better integration and vocational education of young people, and the introduction of dual bachelor's vocational training (see section 3.) in their respective regions and countries. The following activities are planned for this purpose:

- Joint consultations, regular exchange of information as well as mutual sharing of experience in the context of member meetings and working meetings of the Baltic Sea Academy.



- As a part of the respective daily business, provision of information and documentation concerning the Hamburg Model to different target groups, for example public administrations, employment services, vocational schools, politicians, etc.
- Participation in third-party events as well as undertaking own workshops and conferences to present and discuss the Hamburg Model.
- Transfer of the Hamburg Model as well as the specific concepts and evaluation results of the initial implementations within each activity and area of dissemination.
- Specific concepts for the implementation of the Hamburg Model had already been developed for Lithuania and Hungary. Implementations are tested and the implementation plans are prepared for the countries of Latvia, Norway and Poland. These concepts are used for information and transfer purposes and create an important basis for the participation of colleges/universities in the adaptation of the Hamburg Model to the respective regional/national conditions of different countries.
- Process consulting and assistance with the implementation of the Hamburg Model.
- If necessary, carrying out evaluations of implementations of the Hamburg model.
- Demand-oriented implementation of training of vocational education teachers, consultants and instructors as well as the training staff of participating companies.

In the course of the work process and the experience gained, it is possible to develop and implement further measures to promote the implementation of the Hamburg Model.

3. Action Programme “Dual Vocational Education and Dual Studies”

Colleges/universities are supposed to be involved in the most important activities for the implementation of dual educational systems, since they have the necessary scientific capacity, lay the essential foundations in teaching and research, can take over development and adaptation tasks and are ideally suited for the relevant information and advisory tasks. Therefore, colleges/universities should develop a Baltic Sea Region-wide network of promoters, consultants and supporters to assist the implementations and thus together with chambers of crafts, industry and commerce and other public institutions to strengthen the chances of success and sustainable introduction of dual vocational studies in Baltic Sea Region.

The 17 colleges/universities of the Baltic Sea Academy have already received the following detailed documentation:



- Analyses of labour and education markets in Baltic Sea Region
- The dual system of vocational training in Germany
- Concepts and curricula for dual bachelor studies

These and other relevant concepts were discussed together during workshops and international conferences. On this basis, colleges/universities sustainably promote and support the general implementation of dual vocational training and dual degree programmes in the Baltic Sea Region states. In this ways, colleges/universities will be gained to be promoters of dual vocational education and will give assistance implementing dual vocational trainings. In this context, the following activities are planned for the time being:

- Joint consultations, regular exchange of information and experiences at the members' and working meetings of the Baltic Sea Academy.
- As a part of the respective daily business, provision of information and documentation of the dual system of vocational education for various target groups, such as enterprises, training institutions, politicians, public administrations, etc.
- Participation in third-party events as well as undertaking own workshops in order to present and consult the dual system of vocational education.
- International conferences and the Hanseatic Conferences with politicians, employees of administrations, representatives of companies and educational institutions to present and discuss dual education systems and possible implementations.
- Transfer of the German system of vocational education as well as best practice examples from different countries (e.g. Denmark and Norway) in the respective activity and dissemination area.
- Provision of information and advice to politicians, administrations, vocational schools, enterprises, etc.
- A particular shortage situation in countries with predominantly school-based vocational training results from the fact that experienced and qualified staff is rarely available at enterprises. In order to remove these bottlenecks, it will be necessary to introduce the following measures:
 - a) "Training for trainers in companies" with completion of a trainer-aptitude test will be integrated in study courses, so that the junior entrepreneurs already receive the necessary qualifications.
 - b) Implementation of trainings "Training for trainers in Enterprises" in order to prepare the enterprises optimally for the implementation of dual vocational training courses.



c) Implementation of “Training for trainers in enterprises” in chambers and other educational institutions, so that the personnel in enterprises could be trained on a broad basis.

- In the case of dual training, about 2/3 of the total training time is spent in enterprises. Thus, it has a natural consequence that in the case of a transition from school-based to dual vocational education in vocational schools, the personnel and space capacities will be released. The fear of losing a job is a major limiting factor for appropriate reforms. Offering further education, for that there is a great need but limited offerings in the Baltic Sea Region, can be one of the new fields of activity of professional schools, to keep human resources. Baltic Sea Academy and Hanse-Parlament both had already developed around a dozen further training programs and successfully tested in practice in different Baltic Sea Region countries. The present concepts and curricula are transferred to vocational schools, implemented there and Train-the-Trainer seminars for vocational school conducted.
- Implementation of further training for vocational teachers, coaches and advisors.
- Provision of dual systems of vocational education within the framework of study offers for teachers at vocational schools.
- Support in the adaptation of the existing system of dual vocational education in the relevant regional/national conditions.
- Process consulting and assistance with the implementation of dual vocational training.
- Intensive exchange of experience and wide dissemination of information about the requirements, concepts and possibilities concerning dual degree programmes.
- Individual members of the Baltic Sea Academy are already implementing seven different dual bachelor's degree programmes. The existing concepts, curricula, experiences, etc. are transferred and individual implementations are tested.

All the members' and working meetings of the Baltic Sea Academy include joint consultations, feedback, further development of the existing educational and promotional measures as well as the development of new ones. Further relevant promotion projects, which are exemplified in the following section, are implemented to cope with these extensive tasks.

4. Implementation and Realisation

The ongoing implementations of the aforementioned activities are coordinated by the Baltic Sea Academy within the framework of its day-to-day business. In addition,



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Learning
Programme

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Hanse-Parlament informs all its members (see section 5.2) fully, involves them according to their demand and organises co-operations between colleges/universities and the chambers of commerce, industry and crafts in the respective regions.

The Baltic Sea Academy ensures at the same time consultations, regular exchange of information and transfer of experience. As a result of the consultations, further development of the existing measures and the development of additional measures is decided upon and determined who will conduct these works under the lead of the Baltic Sea Academy.

The regular exchange of information and experience as well as manageable works will be financed from own resources of both institutions and their members. Complex work and development tasks should be implemented within the framework of the existing or new funding projects.

For the implementation of more elaborate events, more complex development tasks as well as for the implementation of the educational measures, further projects will be developed within EU or national funding programs, which will then be applied for and implemented by numerous colleges/universities or in cooperation with the Baltic Sea Academy.

On the basis of the past experience and the present results, it has already been decided that during the project “Hamburg Model” by September 2015, under the lead of the Baltic Sea Academy and the Hanse-Parlament, several major projects will be developed and applied for, in particular:

- Growth of Green Jobs in Construction Branches – Increasing Employment in Energy SMEs
- Dual Vocational Training for the Qualification and Integration of Young People and the Strengthening of Innovation in SMEs
- Sectors Skills Alliance 'Management and Technologies of Water, Waste Water, Waste and Cradle to Cradle"
- Closing the Skills Gap, Tuning Graduates' Qualifications to Labour Markets' Needs
- Establishment of a Baltic Sea Region-wide Education and Competence Centre “Energy Efficiency, Climate and Environmental Protection, Including Resource-efficient Construction”

5. Recommendation for a Vote

The present strategic programme was developed, discussed and agreed within the project “Future Perspective: One-year Vocational Qualification (Hamburg Model)” by the project partner Baltic Sea Academy, all other project partners and the involved universities and colleges. The members of the Baltic Sea Academy were involved as associated partners and during their members' meeting on January 20, 2015 they discussed the programme and decided to implement it in the future.