

Erasmus Plus KA2 - Cooperation and Innovation for Good Practices
Strategic Partnerships for VET



BOOK OF BEST PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, skills competitions in vocational education and training have increased in popularity and visibility. The most well-known is the international WorldSkills Competition but also European, national, regional and local skills competitions have become more common in all European countries, and skills competitions have been an important objective on the EU agenda over the last couple of years.

The benefits for the participating students, colleges and companies in skills competitions seem evident. The individual student will strengthen his/hers professional and personal skills. The colleges may gain prestige, especially if their students win a medal. And the companies will be presented as outstanding training places of high quality. Following this, it has often been argued that skills competitions have a major influence on raising the attractiveness and prestige of VET programmes and thereby more appealing for future students. And it has been emphasised that participation in skills competitions creates new learning materials and methods that can be used in the further education and training of VET students.

However, we have only little recorded knowledge about the role of skills competitions in improving the attractiveness of VET and the kind of influence skills in competitions has on the daily teaching and training at VET colleges. Participating and organising skills competitions are often costly for the involved colleges, companies and organisations in terms of labour and equipment. And the efforts in development and use of pedagogical/didactic tools are often reserved for a small number of students. Therefore, the knowledge on skills competitions is essential not only for institutions which organise the events but for all the VET teachers and students who can participate in the competitions and the companies which are looking for their future skilled employees.

The project "Skills and Talent" aims to share experience from partners participating in skills competitions and to create a handbook of good practice for VET institutions, VET teachers and trainers. The handbook presents best Lithuanian, Danish and Polish practice and gives comparisons of the main aspects about skills competitions in those three countries.

Participants of the project:

EUC Zealand, Denmark

For this project "Skills and Talent" EUC Zealand contributed with their experience of participating and organising international and national skills competitions. EUC Zealand was the lead partner in organising and developing activities for the 2019 Danish Skills Championship in Næstved. The activities focused on how to increase the attractiveness of VET by working closely together with the primary and lower secondary schools before, during and after the championship. Henrik Helge has had

the leading role in the project and staff members (trainers and teachers) from EUC Zealand participated in the project, and they contributed with methods, teaching material and experiences from participating in and organising skills competitions.

Kaunas education centre of technologies, Lithuania

On 1 September 2022 - merger of Kaunas Technical Vocational Training Centre, Vilkija School of Agriculture and Kaunas Construction and the merger of the Technical Training Centre of Vilkija and the Service Training Centre, a new legal entity - Kauno Technological Training Centre (hereinafter - the Institution) was established. This is the only one vocational training institution in Kaunas region with an engineering profile, the aim of which is to help a person to acquire basic, secondary education, qualification and/or competences corresponding to modern science, technology, economy and the modern, technical, economic and cultural level, which will help him/her to establish himself/herself and compete in the changing labour market.

Vocational training shall be organised in school-based and apprenticeship forms of vocational training. Quality Kautech's activities are based on a Quality Management System developed, implemented and maintained.

The institution implements more than 140 vocational training programmes, most of them with an engineering profile. The institution's aspiration to international, Erasmus+ programme activities to involve the entire community of the institution, students and staff of all programmes.

Kaunas Technology Training Centre provides training in primary, secondary, formal primary and continuing education and non-formal vocational training programmes, issuing documents validating qualifications and learning achievements. The institution provides training for students of all ages and abilities. The youngest of these are a small socially sensitive special educational needs group. The school has a small group of pupils with special educational needs, aged 14 and over. Vocational training is provided in the following areas: engineering, architecture and construction, manufacturing and processing, business and administration, information and communication technology, health and social welfare, personal services and agricultural production business.

Kautech invites adults to retrain or acquire additional competences: employees of companies, higher education institutions. Students from enterprises, students from other vocational training institutions and teachers. It is also an opportunity for general education. Students in general education can also have the opportunity to learn vocational competences.

The 'Krzyzowa' Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe, Poland

(the Polish name: Fundacja "Krzyżowa" dla Porozumienia Europejskiego) is a politically independent, non-profit organisation and Public Benefit Organisation. All revenues are reinvested into the workings of the Foundation and the maintenance of the Youth Meeting Centre. The bodies of the Foundation- Supervisory and Foundation Boards as well as the working committees- work on a voluntary basis. Organisation is funded by

organising and implementing various educational, cultural, artistic projects funded by different local, regional and national programs at regional or local level or structural funds such as European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund. 'Krzyżowa' implements a lot of projects for schools, incl. vocational schools and organises the courses, mobilities and vocational placements both in Poland and abroad. We organise training for VET teachers on dual system and we organise cross-cooperation activities between schools and companies.

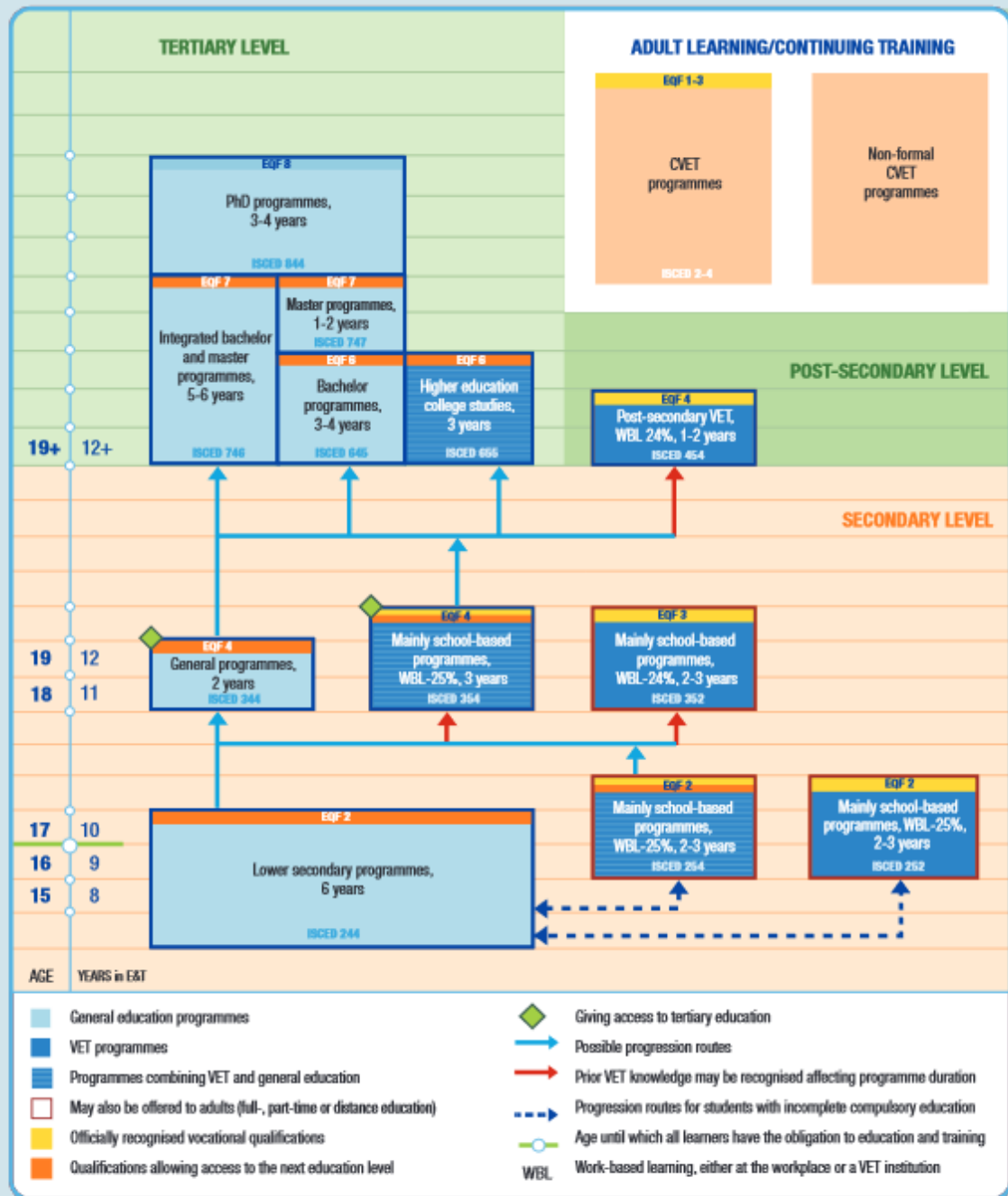
The Foundation's main fields of activities: art education, artistic and literature activities, cultural and multi-cultural and historical education, international exchanges, teachers and VET teacher trainings, development projects for general education schools and VET schools and institutions, workshops for teachers and students, fairs, exhibitions and congress organisation, foreign languages courses, social welfare, cultural events, artistic performances, and other services.

The Mission of 'Krzyżowa' is supporting the peaceful and tolerant existence of nations, social groups and individuals in Europe. In order to do this the organisation brings people from many nations together so that they may talk and share their views of the world. 'Krzyżowa' bursts with life thanks to the diversity of the people who meet here, bringing their ideas to others and learning from the actions of new friends and partners that they meet in this area. The 'Krzyżowa' Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe takes the idea of varied people meeting one another as the basis for the development and support of civil society in Europe. The Foundation builds bridges between the past and the present, between Western and Eastern Europe, and promotes dialogue between generations. 'Krzyżowa' is a place of active communication, and develops different perspectives for everyone so that they may create a brighter future. We believe that the best way to live in the present and plan for the future lies in taking personal responsibility for the political, social and ecologically balanced development of European societies. The organisation brings about intercultural meetings of people from all walks of life, from every social, national and religious background, and from the different generations. In our work diversity of cultures is a real asset, and the most important part of what is brought to the table here at Krzyżowa. Personal experience, together with respect for differences and an eagerness to learn and share with one another, unites and fosters interest in the European Community. We build an international network of people and institutions, we carry out joint projects. The successes of our projects are built on the modern approaches which connect sociocultural diversity and art. The Krzyżowa Foundation employs 55 people. The person responsible for the project in the "Krzyżowa" Foundation and editorship of this Book is Iwona Machoń-Pluszczewska.

1. BEST LITHUANIAN PRACTICE

1.1. Lithuanian VET System

VET in Lithuania's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Lithuania.

The source: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8121_en.pdf

1.2. History and trends of Kaunas construction and service training centre experiences with holding and participation in Skills competitions

1.2.1. Types of championship and industries

Kaunas construction and services training centre participates in skills competitions from the establishment of the organisation from 1986.

Types of championship:

- Local;
- Regional;
- National;
- International.

Skills competitions organised by private companies, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, VET institutions

Participation in Championships. 3 industries:

1) *Construction;*

National Decorators Championship (organised by RESTA);

Wall Tiling Competition (organised by LITEXPO);

International Professional Mastery Competition "Builder";

International Decorator Mastery Competition;

National Decorator Professional Mastery Competition;

National Skills Competition "A Young Carpenter";

Regional Mason Skills Competition (*organiser Kaunas construction and service training centre*);

2) *Nurse assistants;*

National Nursing Assistant Skills Competition (*organiser Kaunas construction and service training centre*);

3) *Cooks with special needs.*

Open BBQ Championship;

Preservation and Fostering of Lithuanian Cuisine and Ethic Heritage Competition (*organiser Kaunas construction and service training centre*);

The Best Chef SEN Apprentice;

BBQ Mastery Competition "Cook 2018" (*organiser Kaunas construction and service training centre*);

Wine and Dessert Competitions;

Skills competition "Palanga Sparling";

International BBQ Championship

Mastery competition "Cook 2017"

1.2.2. Benefits, challenges, opportunities

Benefits:

- Increase the popularity of vocational education and training among young people;
- Valuing students' mastery and motivation;
- Promotion of cooperation among VET institutions;
- Encouragement of cooperation between employers and educational institutions;
- Promotion students' development and professional competences;
- Creation of career advancement opportunities;
- Development of students' creativity, initiative and cooperation;
- Promotion teachers' professional competences.

Challenges:

- Requirement of financial investment;
- Lack of sponsors and supporters;
- Lack of motivation of students and teachers;
- Disinterest of employers;
- Disinterest of VET institutions.

The competition gave students the opportunity to test their existing competencies and gain new ones, to compete with each other and find out which ones are the best of all. During the event, young people developed their hard and soft skills, communication skills, developed verbal and non-verbal skills, deepened their knowledge and managerial abilities, allowing them to think innovatively and to act proactively in the modern world, and to work proactively and creatively. Competitions help to raise the attractiveness of VET, introducing positive stories of VET. VET organisations received good publicity and higher prestige.

Skills competitions promote higher quality training and efficiency of specialists. Rapid technological change requires continuous improvement of specific professional skills, including for VET professionals.

VET become of interest to people: they are knowledgeable about it, have curiosity about it, see it as part of the education landscape, and have a good opinion of it or its graduates.

Teachers observed enhanced students' performance during and after skills competitions. Students gained satisfaction from showing commitment to skills development. Teachers exposed their students to new techniques or products. Standards of teaching and learning are improved. Participation in skills competitions attracted more students. Skills competitions influence to provide high-quality, the times compliant education to each student according to their needs and resources matures as a person, 'extended' civic and national consciousness, and obtain good practical

skills that provide the opportunity to compete in the labour market. Today's labour market requires a qualified specialist, able to adapt to new working conditions, learning to work qualitatively, quickly, independently.

1.2.3. Organization of competitions, suggestions

The school's vocational competitions are organised on the basis of the documents governing the organisation of the competition (competition regulations, descriptions of procedures), the procedures for organising competitions established by the vocational training establishment and established traditions. School vocational competitions are organised by the VET administration in cooperation with the vocational teachers and/or the VET methodological teams, and in some VET establishments also involve senior students (e.g. during the assessment phase). It should be noted that the school's vocational competitions bring the VET community closer together and encourage them to participate more actively in the future activities of the VET institution.

The survey asked vocational training providers to give their views on how vocational training is promoted through vocational competitions. The majority of respondents answered that information about ongoing vocational competitions, together with news and updates on vocational education and training, is published on the websites of vocational training institutions, in the newspapers of vocational training institutions and in the regional press. Seminars and presentations are often organised in conjunction with the competitions, inviting social partners and company representatives. General education students are also invited to observe the competitions and have the opportunity to find out about the process and results during open days. Finally, these competitions to showcase students' professional skills are a celebration for the vocational training institution that trains the masters in their field, as well as a celebration for the cities, towns and their community.

Respondents suggest that vocational competitions should be improved through discussions not only within the VET community, but also with the social partners and employers. They argue that this requires gathering information from students, teachers and employers, seeking their views and suggestions on the need for competitions, their organisation, the way they are organised, the system for assessing participants, the regulations (which need to be improved in terms of clarity and specificity), the tasks (in terms of clarity and clarity of the tasks), the material resources and the funding.

Institutions were asked to make suggestions for improving the professional excellence competitions. Typical suggestions from respondents were as follows:

In the field of organisation:

- Increase funding;
- Transfer competitions to real workplaces;
- transfer the organisation of these competitions to a single institution;
- organise meetings of representatives of vocational training institutions to discuss the organisation of competitions.

In the area of quality assurance:

- Improve organisation (organisation, analysis and evaluation of competitions by a single national authority; no scheduling of competitions during the qualifying examinations, preparation of an annual timetable of competitions, systematic organisation of competitions);
- improving evaluation (involving experts from the business world in the organisation and evaluation of competitions, discussing evaluation at methodological events; developing common evaluation criteria);
- changing the procedure for appointing evaluators (e.g. setting up an independent panel of evaluators).

It was also felt that such competitions are all about participation and demonstration of excellence, which should not be linked to quality assurance.

Publicity:

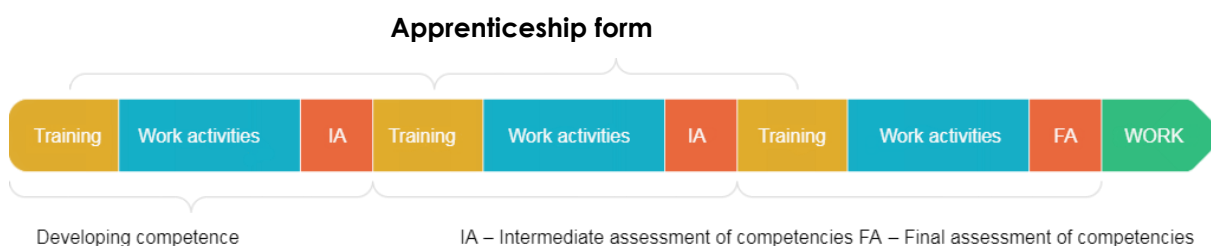
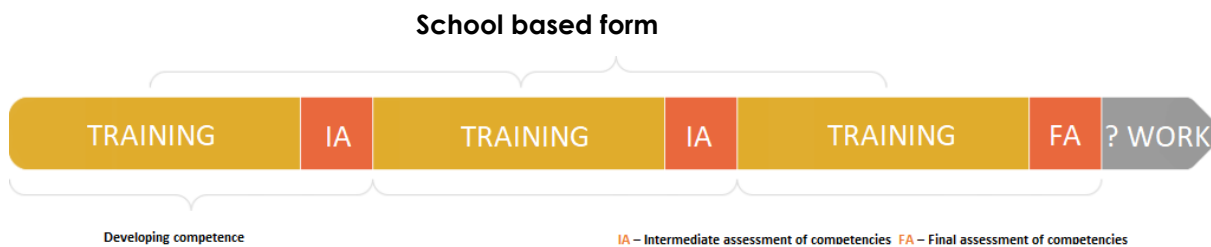
- publishing a publication on "Experiences in organising competitions of professional excellence";
- Scheduling and publicising dates, ideas, initiatives (e.g. a schedule of competitions for the whole year);
- linking the date of the competitions to other events (e.g. linking the competitions to festivals, other events taking place in the city or region).

In the area of participation:

- Increase funding (e.g. subsidise competition organisers);
- Encourage and motivate pupils to participate in competitions.

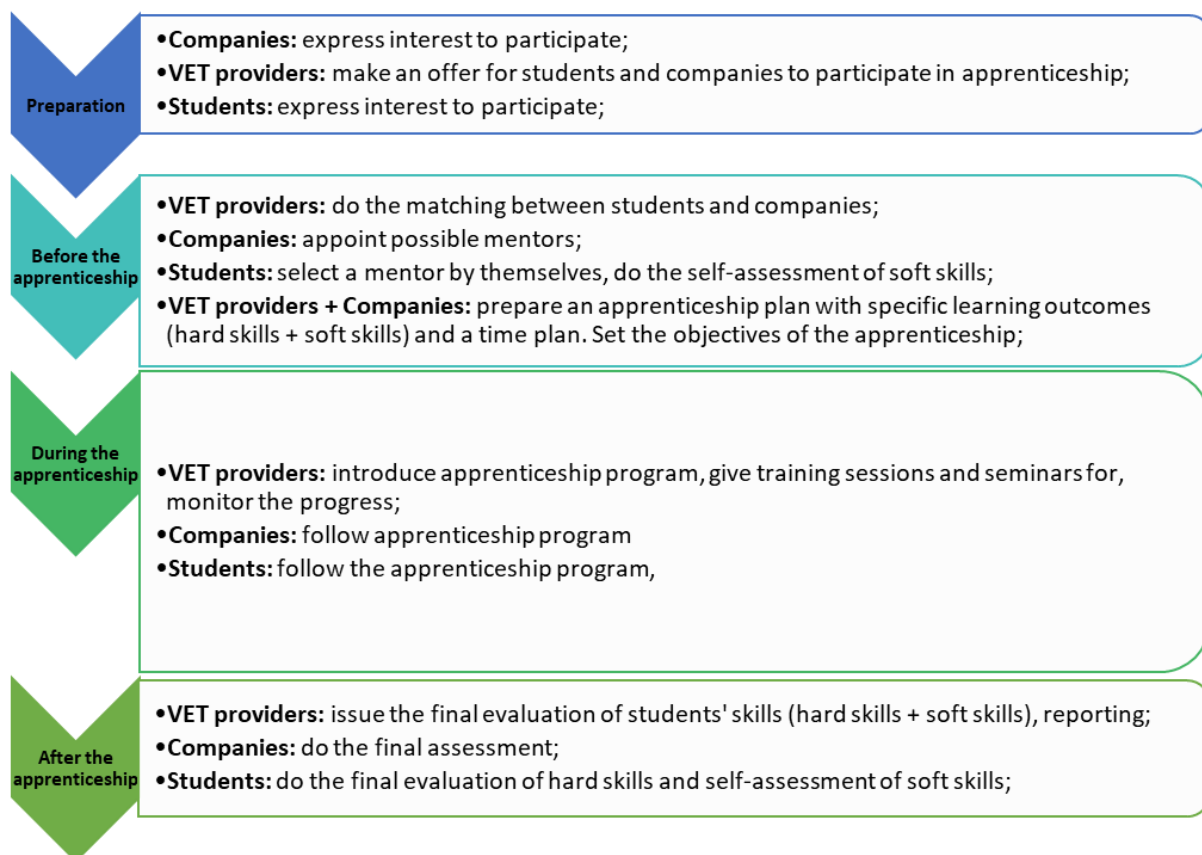
1.2.4. Internships in Lithuania.

Vocational training can be organised in **the form of a school based** or **apprenticeship**, as specified in the vocational training contract.



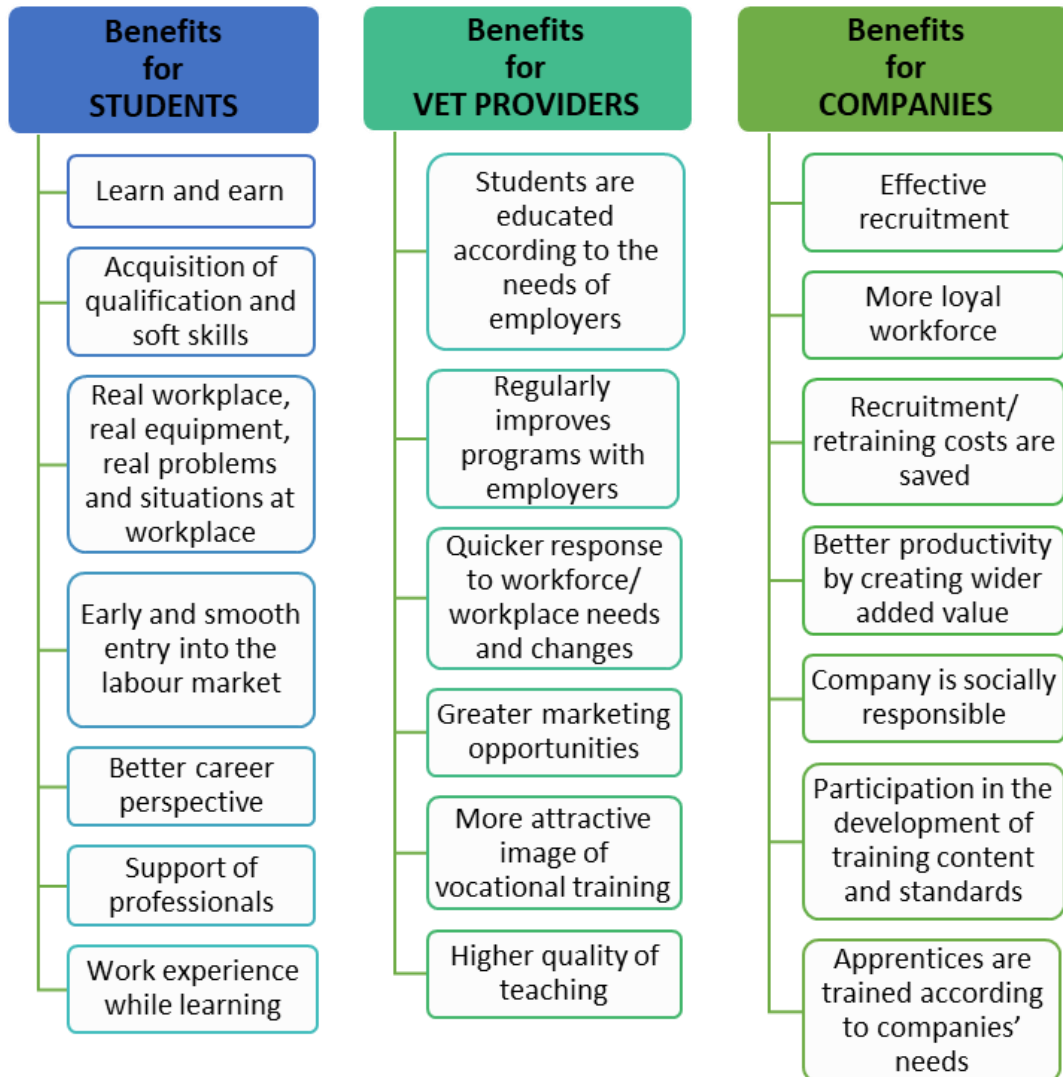
The source: www.pameistrysté.it/en/main-page/

- Apprenticeship scheme chart:



The source: <http://dessaproject.eu/>

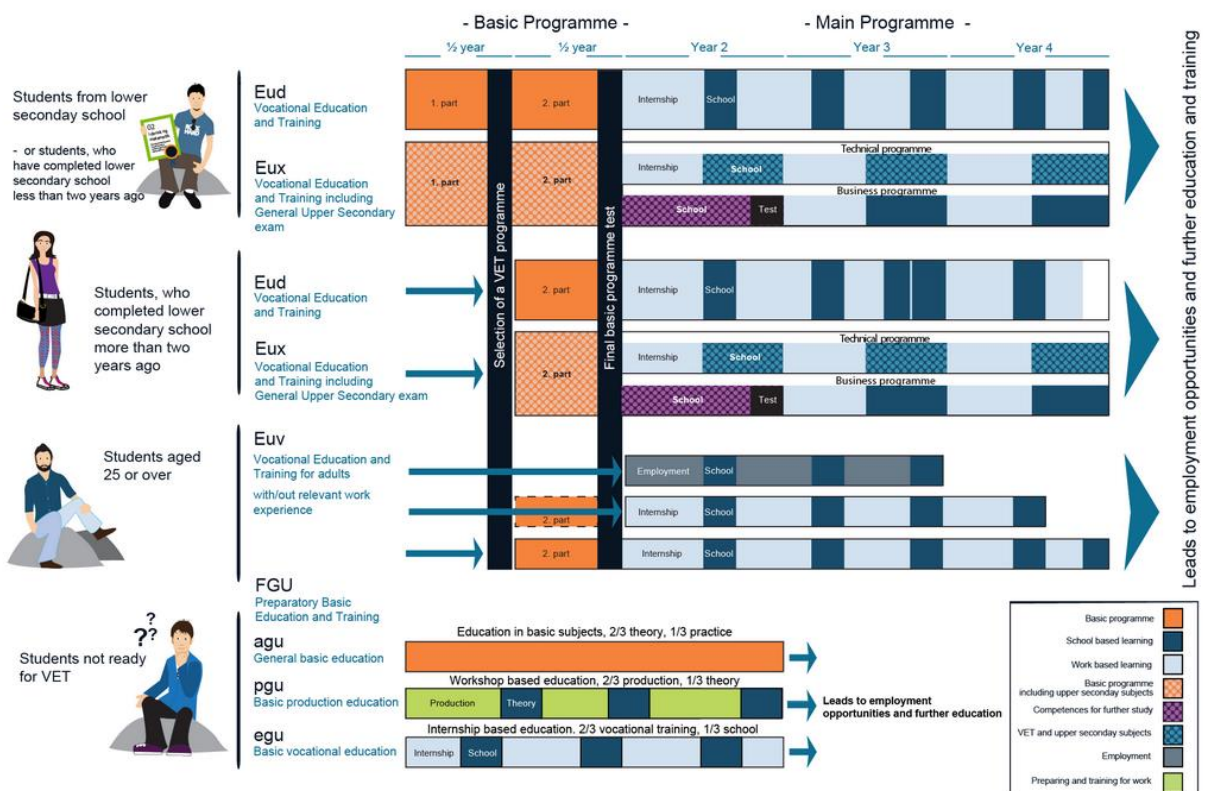
Benefits of the apprenticeship scheme for stakeholders



The source: <http://dessaproject.eu/>

2. BEST DANISH PRACTICE

2.1. Danish VET System



The source: <https://eng.uvm.dk/upper-secondary-education/vocational-education-and-training-in-denmark>

2.2. Danish practice. History of EUC Sjællands Skills championships

Since 2014, we at EUC Zealand have been involved in arranging and participating in Skills championships. The championship participation has been from own local championships, followed by regional championships and finally national championships. In a few cases, we have qualified for participation in EuroSkills and WorldSkills.

In 2017, we arranged for the first time a major local championship which was held outside our own domicile in a shopping centre in Næstved town. This was completed for 11 educations at once and was announced through both social media as well as the press.

The event was followed by a regional championship which was held over several periods and at different schools in their own suitable premises

We held a similar event in 2018 which was the big prelude to Næstved hosting the national championships in 2019. For this event we participated with 7 disciplines, were responsible for the total construction of 2 stands and a number of presentation stands. In 2019, we also held a major event with local championships, but in 2020, qua corona, we did not have the opportunity to complete the competition.

This year is also marked by the repercussions from Corona and championships have only been held sporadically for the subjects that have had a profit for this. However, we have an expectation of participation in the national championships in Høng in 2022, as well as an expectation that we will conduct major events again in 2022 for the local championships.

2.3. What did not work and what worked beyond expectation

What did not work:

- Challenges in connection with the establishment of competitions in tents.
- Substrates have challenges with stable substrates that can accommodate the loads from machines.
- Lifts for passenger cars that cannot be set up due to the large point load and thus instability.
- Power that goes out at night causes problems in the morning.
- Challenges with gas for welding systems as well as compressed air, extraction and electricity. Everything must be done according to the correct safety regulations and this makes the process significantly more expensive.
- IT challenges with shared internet. It is congested and operational disruptions can make it impossible to conduct competition.
- Catering and the capacity with distribution etc. is a challenge. There are many different participants and not everyone has the same needs.
- The police chose to raid buses exactly on the days when we had the competitions. This meant that several buses could not be allowed to continue in the normal way.

What worked beyond expectation:

- We were very lucky with the weather, which allowed the many visitors to be outside. Had the opposite been the case, we would have had challenges with where the spectators should be.
- The logistics with setting up tents etc. worked perfectly, as well as the logistics in truck deliveries which would otherwise easily be able to collide in time pockets.
- The coordination of bus transportation of primary school students from all over the region worked super.
- The collaboration with the stakeholders and the planning of the event worked super.

3. BEST POLISH PRACTICE

3.1. Organisation of Vocational Upper Secondary Education in Poland¹

3.1.1. Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) in Poland has been undergoing major reforms for several years. A number of fundamental changes were introduced in the VET system between 2011 and 2015 to improve its quality and effectiveness and its relevance to the needs of employers and the labour market. However, the most significant changes were introduced by ustawa - Prawo oświatowe (Law on School Education) on 22 November 2018.

Descriptions of occupations in the revised classification of occupations are based on qualifications. The classification for vocational education includes about 200 occupations which comprise over 250 qualifications. One, two or three qualifications are identified within individual occupations. Moreover, five artistic occupations are identified with no qualifications specified. Students and adult learners can acquire qualifications one by one throughout the education process (not only upon finishing the school). Students / learners can take examinations leading to qualifications for an occupation not only at the end of education in school, but also at other stages of education or after the student / learner has obtained a specific qualification. Having passed an exam for a given (single) qualification, the student / learner receives a certificate for this qualification. After passing exams for all the qualifications required to practise a given occupation (and having completed the required level of education), students / learners obtain a diploma attesting to qualifications for a given occupation.

When this study is written, vocational education is still in the process of reform. We will describe here the target state of the reform.

¹ Elaborated on the basis of <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu>

3.1.2. Types of institutions

The VET system in Poland includes the following types of vocational secondary schools for young people:

- A. 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools (for students aged 15 to 18 years). Students who have finished a stage I sectoral vocational school obtain a vocational diploma upon passing a vocational exam, and may continue education in a stage II sectoral vocational school or in grade II of a general secondary school for adults;

A comment on this type of school:

The ongoing reform of the school system has established 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools which have replaced basic vocational schools. After passing a vocational exam, students finishing a stage I sectoral vocational school obtain a vocational diploma, conferring qualifications for specific occupations defined for the labour market.

If they wish to do so, they can continue education in:

- A. since 1 September 2020: a stage II sectoral vocational school training for an occupation which embraces a qualification common to the occupation for which students are trained in stage I and stage II sectoral vocational schools; a general secondary school, starting in grade II.
- B. 2-year stage II sectoral vocational schools (for students aged 19-20 years) established on 1 September 2020. Upon passing a vocational exam for a given occupation, students obtain a vocational diploma, with the title of Technician, in an occupation that embraces a qualification common to the occupation for which students are trained in a stage I and stage II sectoral vocational school. They may also obtain a maturity certificate upon passing the maturity exam.
- C. 5-year technical secondary schools in the new school system (students aged 15 to 20 years) where students obtain not only a vocational diploma conferring vocational qualifications for a given occupation upon passing a vocational exam, but also a maturity certificate upon passing the maturity exam.

A comment on this type of school:

The final cohort of students who finished the pre-reform lower secondary school was enrolled in grade I of pre-reform 4-year technical upper secondary schools for the school year 2019/2020. Grades I in the pre-reform schools will be abolished in the school year 2020/2021 and the higher grades in the following years. Therefore, at the time of writing this study, classes in the pre-reform system are still functioning

- D. 3-year schools preparing for employment, which take students with a moderate and severe intellectual disability and with multiple disabilities and lead to a certificate confirming preparation for employment

3.1.3. Age levels and grouping of students

A class (also referred to as 'division' in the national legislation) is the basic organisational unit in vocational schools. It (nominally) groups students of the same age who jointly follow the same curriculum under the supervision of teachers. All classes at the same education level are referred to as grades in the national legislation. Roman numerals are used to designate classes and grades (grades I to V in 5-year technical secondary schools, and I to III in 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools).

Grouping into classes is based on the age of students as the basic criterion and, where applicable, on the promotion of the student to the next grade. Each class is supervised by a class tutor / teacher. As a rule, a given teacher holds this function throughout the period of education in the school.

The legislation does not define the minimum or maximum numbers of students per class. There are exceptions to this rule; for example, the number of students per class in integration schools and integration classes of mainstream sectoral vocational schools should range between 15 and 20, including 3 to 5 disabled students. Where the number of students in a class of a sectoral vocational school is high, they should be divided into groups for some classes (for example, Computer science / ICT and Foreign language, PE).

3.1.4. Practical vocational training in Polish vocational schools²

Practical vocational training is an integral part of the education process for students of the first and second degree trade school, technical school and post-secondary vocational school.

Its aim is to prepare students to operate efficiently in the profession taught.

It takes place in two forms:

- practical classes (practical workshops), usually held in school workshops or organised at the employer's premises in the form of 1-2 days of workshop classes per week,
- traineeships (vocational apprenticeships) organised at the employer's premises, usually lasting for an uninterrupted period (for example, two weeks or a month).

The practical vocational training is conducted in accordance with a curriculum developed by the vocational teacher, which specifies, among other things, the type and number of hours of instruction at the employer's premises. The curriculum must meet all the conditions set out in the core curriculum, which includes a description of the skills that the student must gain as a result of learning, recommendations for teaching equipment, conditions for the practical vocational training and its duration. The employer may submit comments to the school principal on the curriculum concerning the classes that are provided at the employer's premises.

² Maciej Gruza, *Praktyki i Staże Zawodowe. Poradnik dla przedsiębiorcy*, PARP, Warszawa 2018, page 20

Traineeships (praktyki zawodowe)

Apprenticeships look different in each type of school. Unfortunately in Poland there is no system similar to the German or Danish one, in which we deal with dual vocational education.

Traineeships in 5-YEAR TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor	Weekly number of hours per grade					Total number in the 3-year education cycle
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Vocational training	11	13	12	13	7	56

The length of a practical placement is specified in the core curriculum for vocational education and the timing of the placement (the grade in which students undertake a placement) is determined by the school head. If the placement lasts more than 4 weeks, the school head converts subsequent weeks into hours and the placement is organised as part of vocational training hours (60 minutes of a practical placement correspond to 1 teaching / class hour). The school head may spread over time placements lasting more than 4 weeks.

Traineeships in 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools

Compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor	Weekly number of hours per grade			Total number in the 3-year education cycle
	I	II	III	
Vocational training	12	18	20	50

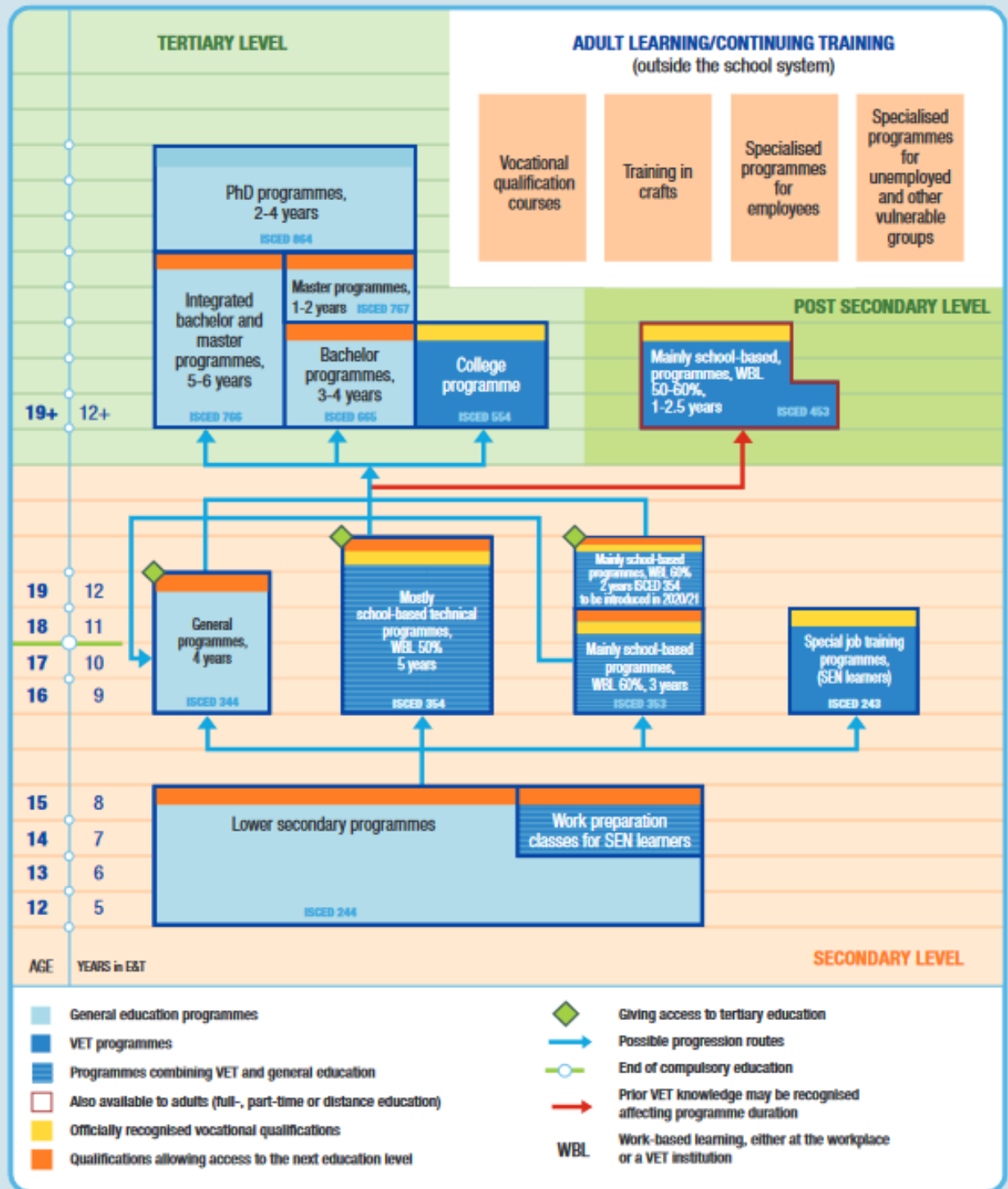
The hours allocated to compulsory vocational training are distributed by the school head. However, the number of hours allocated to practical training may not be lower than 60% of the total number of hours for vocational training. For students who are juvenile workers, the head distributes the hours in consultation with employers, and taking into consideration the provisions of Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r., Kodeks Pracy (Act of 26 June 1974, The Labour Code) (Journal of Law 2018, item 917, as subsequently amended). However, the number of hours for practical training may not be lower than 60% of the total number of hours for vocational training.

Traineeships in stage II sectoral vocational schools

The duration of practical placements is 4 weeks (140 hours). Students undertake a placement in the grade chosen by the school head. The school head may spread

a practical placement over a period of time. Vocational training takes place as part of vocational qualification courses; its duration is determined in the national core curriculum for vocational education (for a given occupation), taking into consideration regulations issued on the basis of Article 117, section 5 of Ustawa - Prawo oświatowe (The Law on School Education). The hours for the compulsory vocational training classes are distributed by the school head; however, the number of hours allocated to practical vocational training may not be lower than 50% of the total number of hours for vocational training.

VET in Poland's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Poland.

The source: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8125_en.pdf

3.2. Polish practice

In Poland the Skills competition has the name "Worldskills- Poland". They are held in six occupational areas:³

- 1) Information and Communication Technology,
- 2) Manufacturing and Engineering Technology,
- 3) Construction and Building Technology,
- 4) Transportation and Logistics,
- 5) Social and Personal Service,
- 6) Creative Arts and Fashion.

The organisation which leads and organises the WorldSkills Poland Competitions is the Foundation for the Development of the Education System which is the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme.

There are 9 competitions:

- Floristry,
- CNC milling,
- Hairdressing,
- Sanitary and heating installations,
- Electrical installations,
- Furniture making,
- Farm vehicle mechanics,
- Hotel guest services,
- Carpentry.

The participant can only take part in one competition. For the Gdańsk which took place in 26-27.11.2021 competitions the rules and regulations were enclosed on <https://worldskillspoland.org.pl/skillspoland2021-gdansk/>.

You could take part in the event as:

- 1) a participant (limit of age: 18-23 years old)
- 2) a partner as a company
- 3) a volunteer

There was also a possibility to be an observer.

The winners will represent Poland in Worldskill Competitions in Shanghai in 2022.

In Gdańsk there were 9 winners⁴:

- 1) Weronika Kwiatek (Floristry)
- 2) Tytus Sokołowski (CNC milling)

³ <https://worldskillspoland.org.pl/en/worldskills-poland-competitions/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/WorldSkillsPoland/>

- 3) Emilia Wilde (Hairdressing)
- 4) Michał Jelinski (Sanitary and heating installations)
- 5) Tomasz Chlipała (Electrical installations)
- 6) Józef Pruszczyk (Furniture making)
- 7) Marek Wiącek (Farm vehicle mechanics)
- 8) Dawid Miotk (Hotel guest services)
- 9) Radosław Kropaczewski (Carpentry)

The Foundation "Krzyżowa" for Mutual Understanding in Europe cooperates with various vocational education schools from the region. One of the VET schools in Świdnica – Zespół Szkół Elektryczno-Budowlanych im. Jana III Sobieskiego w Świdnicy (in English: the Electrical and Construction Technical School Complex in Świdnica) took part in the National finals of WorldSkills Poland in Gdansk. The aim of the National finals was to select the best students - champions in various fields of vocational training. Students presented their professional skills in nine different vocational competitions, mentioned above, including electrical installations that took part in the event. The two-day competition in Gdansk consisted in the execution of a complex installation using a multitude of apparatuses, components and automatic controls. Six winners of national eliminations took part in the electricians' competition, among them Szymon Dziedzic, a student of the graduating class of the Electrical and Construction Technical School Complex in Świdnica. Szymon took the third place in the national final. It is his great success which is a result of his commitment, diligent work during school classes, his own work and great talent.

The winner of the WorldSkills Poland final in Gdansk will go to China for the World Championships in Shanghai. Szymon Dziedzic, the bronze medal winner, believes that the WorldSkills Poland adventure is a motivation to work and the experience gained will encourage him to take part in the next edition as a student.

During the project partners meeting in Krzyżowa, Poland in March 2022, the participants took part in the meeting with deputy teacher, vocational teachers and Szymon Dziedzic from the Electrical and Construction Technical School Complex in order to learn the good practices from their point of view. First of all, Szymon's success in the completion was the result of the close mutual cooperation between the VET teachers of many specialisation (because the skill competition tasks covered more than one vocational area), companies (which provide professional training on their equipment for the training), colleagues and family members that encouraged Szymon to work hard. The other thing was that Szymon got the scholarship from Technical University so that he could study there when he completes his education in technical school. After the national competition in Gdansk, he decided to learn more in order to attend the next competition as a university student.

Szymon's participation in the finals of the competition shows that the level of teaching of vocational subjects at the school is high, which results in the increased prestige of the school. Students, teachers and school management are very proud

of Simon's results and attitude, congratulate him and wish him good luck. Szymon started to believe in his skills and in the conversation with project's partners he said that now he likes learning vocational skills very much and he is happy because now he will have a good educational and professional career.



The bronze medal which was gained by Szymon Dziejdzic in the field of Electrical installations

Source: <https://zsbe-swidnica.edupage.org>

In 2023 the eight edition of the biennial EuroSkills Competition – will be held in Gdańsk in Poland and organised by WorldSkills Europe together with 32 Member Countries. “EuroSkills Gdańsk 2023 will welcome 600 skilled young professionals under the age of 25 from 32 countries to participate in competitions and demonstrations in 43 different skills and trades. Around 100,000 visitors from across Poland and abroad are expected to attend.”⁵

⁵ <https://eurosills2023.org/pl/about-es-gdansk-2023/>

4. The comparison of 3 countries in organisation of Skills Competitions

Project partners prepare the table in order to compare the organisation of Skills Competitions and internships in 3 countries. The comparison is presented in the table below:

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
1. Financing	<p>The school funds participation in the competition. The school finds sponsors. There are 4 sources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Skills Denmark – organisation which organise and finance the Competitions, 2) The representatives from Crafts (they finance their own craft) 3) The school finance – participants and school within the school budget 4) Sponsors 	<p>The school prepares an action plan and applies to the Ministry to obtain funding to organise the competition. Depending on the amount of funding, a decision is made about the scale of the event.</p> <p>In order to raise additional funds, the school looks for sponsors (private companies, funding of working time, purchase of materials, etc.).</p>	<p>The main source of financing of the Skills Competitions at the national level comes from Foundation for the Development of the Education System (in Polish: Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji). The Foundation has partners which support the competitions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equipment rental and hire - transport and logistics - vocational training and workshops for certain professions and their specialisation - vocational placements apprenticeship which give students opportunities to gain the vocational experience and using the most modern equipment - presentation of new technology and current news from various industries - training and workshops materials needed for a specific profession, for example

⁶ Information on Skills Competitions in Poland from Online Interview with Grzegorz Chrobak, Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Aug 2022

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
			<p>clothes, uniforms, flowers, headphones, manuals, cables and wires.</p> <p>The list of main partners is presented on the website: https://worldskillspoland.org.pl/partnerzy/</p> <p>The schools which participate in competitions find sponsors which represent companies and enterprises or private donors. Moreover, the costs of the travelling and additional tutoring is covered by school or VET teachers who give the students additional tutoring and mentoring. Participants need to have resilience to stress, ability to concentrate, which is why there were groupings organised for the finalists four times a year (before the pandemic), which included additional training in English, physical preparation training and advice on appropriate diet, so that the participants were strong and healthy, as some of the competitions require a lot of physical and mental strength and professional skills.</p>
2. Organisation	<p>Firstly: In Denmark it is organised in the lead Skill Denmark (national level) The second- organised by representatives of Crafts</p> <p>Thirdly:</p>	<p>Writing application form by the school, funding from government; the school is responsible for all areas of organisation – searching for sponsors , buying materials, selections of students, completing of jury, decisions about prize, etc.</p>	<p>In the first stage, the Ministry of Education identified an institution - the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, which is the National Agency of the Erasmus + Programme - to organise the national eliminations and prepare the staff for the World Skills Competitions. Initially, participants who had achievements in various competitions and Olympiads were</p>

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
	In school: The structure of decision making at school: the board - the managers – the leaders – the teachers. The board decides to organise the competition, the managers organise the time of the leaders and teachers; the place and dates of the competition are set.	To confirm: the companies need to cooperate with schools in order to organise the Competition, they can't do it on their own	selected at national level. In the first year (2017-2018), the national level was lower than the international level, hence it was decided to organise Skills Poland national qualifiers. The first preliminaries were held in 2019 in the catering competition at Polagra. In the meantime, other candidates watched the international competitions and trained. In addition, there has been a strong commitment to working with global partners who have a structure in Poland. A group of specialists is currently being prepared to work with the participants in the competition (this is a staff of specialists from a nutritionist and a psychologist, as well as support staff.)
3. The practical organisation in skills competition	<p>At the national level it is a big event for many trades at the same time. At the local level, competitions for the trades are organised separately.</p> <p>In the preparation phase there is brainstorming (what we can do, what the costs will be, where to find sponsors; how to plan the layout of the different stands, what we have and what we need to rent. Sponsors can count on the presence of their logos. Important: the national organiser's guidelines are, that there should not be too much advertising.</p>	Competitions for several professions are not organised at the same time. Applications are submitted by schools separately for each craft - for each profession the competition takes place on a different date, individual competitions can be organised by different schools. Once the ministry has granted funding, a budget is set up at the school. Tasks related to the preparation and implementation of a given competition are taken over by a team of 4-5 people.	<p>A World Skills Poland Office was set up in 2020 and a 7-year plan (action scheme) was developed in 2021. Regional competitions are held in the various regions of Poland (for example, the preliminaries for a chemical laboratory technician in Małopolska were prepared by the AZOTY Company, and a competition on new IT technology was held in Lublin (with the cooperation of the Marshal's Office), and a competition on digital construction was organised in Kraków in Oct 2021.</p> <p>The organisation of the competition includes promotional activities. For example, during</p>

Topic	Country		
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	<p>Project checklist as an example of good practice in competition management</p> <p>The checklist allows you to monitor the degree to which the individual tasks have been carried out.</p> <p>It is important to carefully analyse the course of the competition, the equipment/tools needed, to ensure safety procedures.</p> <p>The competition venue is organised so that the every stand is visible to the public - the competition is visited by students preparing for their career choice.</p> <p>The challenge - to generate interest in students visiting the competition.</p> <p>The competition is organised simultaneously for many trades - it is a big undertaking, it is necessary to rent a large space (e.g. in a stadium), tents, etc.</p> <p>Pupils visiting the competition thus have the opportunity to see different</p>	<p>The tasks to be carried out are divided into those related to theoretical issues and those related to practice.</p> <p>The schools that organise the respective competitions cooperate with each other, e.g. in the selection of participants (agreeing on the training plan and the number of people from the respective school participating in the competition).</p> <p>Activities undertaken: - analysing what the school has available to organise the competition and what is missing - Decide where and when the competition will take place - assemble the jury.</p> <p>Each competition has different requirements - depending on the profession. The competitions are organised on the school premises.</p> <p>The competitions are closed. They are not open to the public. Their</p>	<p>the national qualifiers in Gdansk in 2021, the idea of World Skills was promoted in Poland, by additional demonstrations and training workshops which were organised for 100 teachers, as well as panels and debates on VET development. At the Trial Skills stands, students were given the opportunity to perform short and simple tasks lasting about 10 minutes.</p> <p>National media were involved (Polsat and TVN), information was conveyed that state-of-the-art equipment would be used during the competition, cross-sector partner exchanges were organised: school-business, enabling the organisation of patronage classes and equipped laboratories.</p> <p>The key role of the organisers is to provide, secure and prepare the equipment (which is often very expensive and is rented for the duration of the competition) and to prepare the finalists (organise training before the competition on the equipment that will be available during the competition).</p>

Topic	Country		
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	<p>professions and find out which is of interest to them.</p> <p>The competition is a good advertising opportunity for the school.</p> <p>The competition is an opportunity to spread vocational education among students.</p>	<p>organisation is similar at each level.</p>	
<p>4. What could encourage students to participate in Skills Competitions?</p>	<p>In order to participate in the start of school year teachers point out the students who could be good to participate, then the teachers encourage students to participate. The initiative comes from the teachers, but if the student is eager to participate and is good enough he/she may participate. The companies have to support the decision and give the time and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better jobs and opportunities, for fun, - Popular competitions - Uniforms for participants, - The competition is recognised and is not for everyone (only for the best – the elite) 	<p>Good prize for the winner could be a good motivation for the others (some kind of grant, scholarship or even a job offer).</p> <p>Small competition at the class level, to help choose the best representative. Not everybody might be eager to participate, but it should be a task for the teacher to encourage students.</p> <p>To raise the qualification for the teachers – the involvement in the competitions is one of them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better CV for students to get the job, for teachers – as well – to change to better work <p>Teacher encourages the students and chooses the students for the participation in the competition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging pupils, who do not participate in some kind of supporting the representative of the class (e.g. the PR of the event in different types of media, especially in social media, supporting in practical preparations to the event) which strengthens relationships within the group and increases interest in the event; the PR activities also are promoting the school, - Scholarships from universities for the students who participate in competitions at the national level - admission to university without entrance exams for the finalists of the competitions; - paid Internships in well-known enterprises for the participants of the competitions; - better job opportunities (because of better CV) - Schools, VET teachers and VET students should be informed that the competition is an opportunity to test the students skills,

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		- Open, big event might encourage to participation (but at the moment in Lithuania most of the events are closed for big audience)	gain their first contacts in the industry or improve their qualifications through prestigious training sessions with the best experts from the world of science and business. The information can be provided by social media, films and photo reports about the success stories of the participants.
5. Who provides internships?	Just a year ago (in 2021), it was 100% the student's responsibility to find an apprenticeship. Today it has been changed so that it is the school's responsibility to find places for the students. In practice, we dress our students so that they themselves apply for apprenticeships, which the school then follows up on.	Vocational training can be organised in the form of a school based or apprenticeship, as specified in the vocational training contract. The school-based form of vocational education and training is provided by the vocational education and training institution or other school where theoretical and practical training is provided. When a vocational training establishment concludes a vocational training contract with an enterprise, an institution, an organisation for which vocational training is not the main activity, a farmer, a freelance teacher and an apprentice, the practical training and/or apprenticeship may be carried out in a workplace that meets the	Internships are provided by schools with a cooperation with companies. In the Regulation of the Ministry of Education of February 22, 2019 on practical vocational training, according to § 3 of the aforementioned regulation, students' practical vocational training is organised by a school or by an employer who has entered into an employment contract with a student for the purpose of professional preparation.

Topic	Country		
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		<p>requirements of the vocational training programme.</p> <p>The traineeship may be carried out in a company, institution, organisation, farm or, if not possible, at the Provider's vocational training base. The apprentice in employment may carry out the apprenticeship in his/her own workplace, in accordance with the requirements of the vocational training programme.</p> <p>Vocational training is organised in the form of apprenticeships.</p> <p>An enterprise, institution, organisation, farmer or other natural person for whom vocational training is not the main activity and who enters into an employment contract (hereinafter referred to as the "employer") and a vocational training contract with a person, and who holds a vocational training licence in accordance with the procedure laid down by law;</p> <p>The vocational training institution and the employer, once they</p>	

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
		have concluded a vocational training contract with the person. A cooperation agreement between the VET institution and the employer.	
6. How do we prepare the students to apply for internships?	<p>With great variation in the crafts, there are different methods. Some professions do nothing as there is no tradition for this, as well as great demand for labour and thus also apprentices. Other crafts make a great virtue out of preparing students through help with applications and resumes as well as preparation for an oral presentation.</p>	<p>The apprenticeship supervisor draws up the apprenticeship programme, which sets out the apprentice's practice tasks. PRACTICAL TRAINING - PREPARING YOU FOR WORK.</p> <p>To ensure that students are well prepared for specific jobs, have strong practical skills and are able to compete in an ever-changing labour market, more than 70% of the programme's hours are spent on practical activities.</p> <p>Practical training is delivered at the Centre using innovative teaching tools, equipment and technology. Students in the final year of the course undertake practical training in real workplaces - the best companies, institutions and organisations in the region.</p>	<p>Vocational placement as a part of students education in their VET schools is obligatory as professional preparation. Schools help students to choose the company according to the students' field of vocational specialisation. It is most often that the school arranges apprenticeship sites for students.</p> <p>However, in order to arrange an apprenticeship on their own, students need to choose a place of internships in a company, and then make the appropriate application to the potential employer.</p> <p>Moreover, there are a lot of additional internships provided by projects implemented by different educational institutions within a framework of the European Social Fund. The internships here are optional, however before the project is organised, the needs of students are examined and the most modern companies are introduced, especially in the fields needed in the labour market.</p>

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7. What challenges do we experience in the collaboration with the companies?	<p>The companies often have expectations that we have "brought up" the students so that they, socially, have good manners and a sense of duty to adhere to meeting times. Unfortunately, we have typically had them for less than a year at our school, where the primary school has had them 9 years before, not to forget the parents' responsibility for the regular upbringing. Nevertheless, it is us who are blamed when they do not live up to social expectations.</p> <p>If we disregard the above, it is generally our experience that we have a good collaboration with the companies. In the course of the education, there are a number of written down practical goals that the student must achieve during the time spent with the company. Many companies take this task very seriously and thus also have good communication with the school, few do not take it so seriously.</p>	<p>Strengths of the apprenticeship scheme: prepared qualified professionals; more self-confident and motivated apprentices; faster and higher quality learning/teaching process; better image and quality of VET providers, vocational training, apprenticeships; companies directly involved in the development of applications according their needs; stronger cooperation between the VET providers and companies;</p> <p>Weaknesses of the apprenticeship scheme: unfavourable business environment, burden-some legislation and internal shortfalls make many companies be reluctant to engage in training apprentices during apprenticeship; possible lack of motivation from students' perspective;</p> <p>Threats of the apprenticeship scheme: there is no guarantee for employer, that the trained and qualified apprentice will stay in</p>	<p>Building, maintaining and constantly updating and expanding the school's contacts with companies is very important. It is essential to select the most suitable company for students from a database of enterprises, especially the companies that are open and interested in providing vocational training for young people in need of support. Thanks to long-term cooperation with these companies, it is known which plants are looking for workers, what conditions they impose and what action strategies can or will be effective.</p> <p>The main challenges in cooperation with the companies in the organisation of internships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - actively counteracting various problems during vocational training, - actively counteracting the dropout of the students from training and internships, - arranging for the students to take additional, supplementary classes if necessary (e.g., welder's licence, forklift operator, etc.), - providing professional training and courses and internships for VET teachers in order to up-date their knowledge and vocational skills

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		the same company or will choose this company as a workplace after the apprenticeship program; rapidly changing society. A very striking feature of our times is the accelerating rate at which change occurs. In every area of human endeavour a great deal of new knowledge is being generated, and old practices are being rejected one after another. At this point in history, no one can possibly deny that society, in all its aspects (social, economic, political and cultural) is going through a fundamental process.	
8. What are our students good at	The youth is as it always has been, but we think that our students are good at "going after the goal" as long as they know the goal.	Hardworking, goals to learn about innovations, working materials, meet new colleagues	Students are motivated to take part in additional vocational training and courses which give additional qualifications and licence, they are also interested in international mobilities.
9. What are our students bad at	The general approach of using mobile phones and the realisation that they are not the ones the world is about are probably the biggest challenges	Motivation. Students from villages and small towns are more diligent and motivated, than from big towns.	- Students don't have the knowledge what predispositions are needed for their chosen profession, - students are also unable to determine what professions are in demand in the labour market today (even locally),

Topic	Country		
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			- students basically decide which profession they want to study according to their friends advice or without thinking it through or they just choose the school where they know their studying will not be too difficult.
10. How about subsidy schemes	When students are on school leave, companies receive almost full reimbursement from the state. It is only while the students are with the company that there is a full salary expense.	Government Subsidies Minimal salary in Lithuania 730 EUR per month. In 2021 Average monthly gross wages in the public sector grew by 7.7% to €1,817 and in the private sector by 11.7% to €1,620. An apprenticeship allows you to hire a worker right away. Employers providing vocational training in the form of apprenticeship shall be reimbursed, at their written request, 70% of the part of the wage specified in the employment contract of the person employed under the apprenticeship, not exceeding 1.5 times the minimum monthly wage approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and the part of the insurer's compulsory state social insurance contributions	The school cannot order employers to pay for apprenticeships, nor can it prohibit them from doing so. It does not mediate or decide the salary. The whole thing is up to the potential employer. In many technical schools it is the school that arranges apprenticeships for students. Then, most often, they are free of charge. However, the student can independently look for a workplace where he or she can do the internship. Then the answer to the question: whether the apprenticeship at the technical school gets money, may be different.

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
		<p>calculated on this part of the wage.</p> <p>the costs of organising and coordinating the work activities and practical training of a designated master (foreman), apprentice, the amount of which shall be calculated on the basis of the time actually worked by the master in organising and coordinating the work activities and practical training of the apprentice, on the basis of the hourly wage calculated for the master, or fixed in the contract of employment, up to a maximum of 1 MVA, and the part of the insurer's compulsory state social security contributions calculated on the basis of that wage, up to a maximum of 20 % of the salary calculated for the master.</p>	
11. How about financial company sanctions	<p>Fines have been introduced for those companies that do not have a sufficient number of apprentices in relation to the skilled workers in the company. The amount is approximately 3500 EUR per missing student per year.</p>	<p>No sanction for companies in Lithuania</p>	<p>No sanction for companies in Poland.</p>
12. Student salaries	<p>Pupils in the first part of their education earn about 1/3 of what a graduate</p>	<p>Minimal salary in Lithuania 730 EUR per month.</p>	<p>The law only regulates that salary for students during vocational placement</p>

Topic	Country		
	Denmark	Lithuania	Poland ⁶
	<p>earns. In the later part of their education, they earn well ½ from what a graduate earns.</p>	<p>In 2021 Average monthly gross wages in the public sector grew by 7.7% to €1,817 and in the private sector by 11.7% to €1,620. An apprenticeship allows you to hire a worker right away. Employers providing vocational training in the form of apprenticeship shall be reimbursed, at their written request, 70% of the part of the wage specified in the employment contract of the person employed under the apprenticeship, not exceeding 1.5 times the minimum monthly wage approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and the part of the insurer's compulsory state social insurance contributions calculated on this part of the wage.</p> <p>The costs of organising and coordinating the work activities and practical training of a designated master (foreman), apprentice, the amount of which shall be calculated on the basis of the time actually worked by the master in organising and</p>	<p>cannot be more than twice the minimum wage. In 2022, the gross minimum wage is PLN 3010, the net amount is PLN 2,209.56 per month.</p> <p>Usually students are only paid for internships within EU projects. In the projects of the "Kryzowa" Foundation it is PLN 2000 per 150 hours of the placement.</p>

Topic	Country		
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		<p>coordinating the work activities and practical training of the apprentice, on the basis of the hourly wage calculated for the master, or fixed in the contract of employment, up to a maximum of 1 MVA, and the part of the insurer's compulsory state social security contributions calculated on the basis of that wage, up to a maximum of 20 % of the salary calculated for the master.</p>	

CONCLUSION FROM EACH PARTNER

EUC Sjælland:

Through our project meetings, we have gained good insight into how our countries and schools work with Skills competitions. The premise for working with the competitions has been different, which is why the countries' holding of competitions have also been different and thus not immediately comparable across the board. However, this has not meant that we have not been able to mutually let ourselves be inspired by each other and thus be able to take home good and useful knowledge that we will be able to use when holding future Skills competitions. The visits to the countries involved have given a good insight into the cultural diversity and overlaps, and relationships have been created that will facilitate future collaborations and project implementations in addition to the holding of Skills competitions.

Kaunas education centre of technologies:

During the project's implementation period we learned about the situation in Poland, Denmark, Lithuania when it comes to organising competitions for professional excellence. We see how far Denmark has come. In Denmark in to competitions for professional excellence are involving all sectors of society. In Lithuania students participating in competitions for professional excellence, because practical skills are improved, cultivated values, learning time planning, cultivating collective responsibility, social responsibility is encouraged, connections are made with colleagues and business enterprises, communication and cooperation experience is gained, educating future leaders, this is an opportunity to contribute to the creation of the centre's microclimate by encouraging and setting an example for the community.

Students look forward to the annual competitions and prepare diligently for them. Usually, the first stage of the competition takes place at the training institution itself, where they have to beat their peers, followed by their peers studying the same profession at other vocational training institutions in the region, and only then does the way open to the national competition, whose winners are entitled to represent Lithuania in international competitions of young craftsmen's professional excellence. Also participants learned about competitions for professional excellence students of special needs: Students have a lot of social exclusion, so it takes a long time to get the courage to participate; participation in the competition requires financial investment, su training centre is grateful to business companies for their support and trust; students with special needs always want to be winners and often experience short-term frustration; Attitude and student's understanding that it is enough to participate, not necessarily to win, is very important.

In short, This Erasmus + project "Skills and Talent" was a tool to promote vocational training in Europe. It was a chance to obtain new knowledge, innovations, and soft skills.

The "Krzyżowa" Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe:

The project "Skills and Talent" showed us very useful initiatives - how to promote the new labour market and needed vocational skills and how to encourage young people to VET. We saw how Skills Competitions provide an opportunity for young apprentices to meet their colleagues from other regions or countries, compare experiences or come into contact with business - with entrepreneurs and sponsors who often equip them or provide specialist training. Moreover, for vocational teachers it is a challenge and motivation to update their knowledge and familiarity with modern technologies, and for the schools participating in the competition - satisfaction and strengthening of cooperation with entrepreneurs.

We could learn how Skills Competitions are organised in different countries and how big impact it can give for various institutions.

We are very happy that Poland will organise EuroSkills for the first time in 2023.

We can learn from the EuroSkills website that: "Visitors to the free-admission Competition will be able to watch the competitors in action and have the opportunity to try hands-on job-related skills at the many 'Try-a-Skill' demonstrations. The tens of thousands of school-aged young people who visit will be encouraged to turn their passions into a profession. EuroSkills Gdańsk 2023 is organised in partnership by Poland's Foundation For The Development Of The Education System (FRSE), WorldSkills Poland, WorldSkills Europe, the City of Gdańsk and AMBEREXPO Gdańsk."⁷ We believe we will meet our project partners or their students and teachers in Gdańsk in 2023.

⁷ please find more information on: <https://eurosills2023.org/pl/about-es-gdansk-2023/>

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Partners Websites:

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- **Lithuania:** www.profcentras.lt
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