Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland

Comparative Expert Study
Part 1: Economic Framework Conditions and Historical Development of dual VET in the Countries of Comparison

ibw - Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (Research & Development in VET)
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As a rule, gender-specific names and formulations apply to both genders.

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1. Economic framework conditions and historical developments

1.1. Background

The dual vocational education and training systems in Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and Switzerland have evolved over time and are considerably influenced by the economic framework conditions and the historical development process in the country in question. They are similar to each other in many respects. This includes the fact that they are not the result of deliberate planning but rather are the outcome of a complex historical process. This chapter of the study gives a brief overview of the economic situation and the historical developments of the dual vocational education and training systems in the four countries.

Comparison of key economic data over time

The following table summarises the main key data to give an overall economic comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (in % of the working population aged 15-64)</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td>CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real economic growth (in %)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget balance (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government debt (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export rate; exports of goods and services (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research quota (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE: Comparison of key economic data for Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein over time¹ (in-house presentation; sources: see below).

a) Liechtenstein: unemployment rate in % of the working population aged 15 or older (Amt für Statistik, no date)²
b) Data from 2006
c) Data from 2014
d) Data from 2013
e) Data from 2012

¹ Source: https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/Interessenvertretung/ZahlenDatenFakten/Laenderprofile_weltweit.html, 27.10.2015
1.2. Austria

Economic structure

Austria is one of the richest countries in the EU. Nominally, the entire GDP is 329 billion euros (2014), with 1.3% of this allocated to the primary sector, 28.4% is generated in the producing industries (secondary sector) and 70.3% is attributed to services (tertiary sector). In the area of tourism – an economic sector which is important for creating value and for employment in Austria and which, unlike in many other countries, takes place throughout the year – there were around 132 million overnight stays (Austrians and foreigners) overall in 2014, with around 50 million of these coming from Germany. The high share of industry in Austria in an international comparison is characterised by a highly developed mechanical engineering sector, many automotive suppliers and also several large medium-sized businesses which are highly specialised and which, in some cases, are the global market leader in their segment. The public spending ratio (proportion of the entire government expenditure to GDP) is, at around 52% (2014), above the average of the EU states. The position of Austrian companies in Central and Eastern Europe is relatively strong. This applies to capital investments as well as exports. More than 40% of all Austrian foreign investments are made in this region. Austrian banks are also heavily involved in Eastern and Southeast Europe.3

Socio-economic context and historical development of dual vocational education and training

Back in the Middle Ages, master craftsperson apprenticeships organised in guilds, initiated by craft communities, emerged in order to secure the next generation of professionals. Social and economic upheavals meant that this training became less important in the course of the 18th/19th century. In 1859 a new Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act (Gewerbeordnung) was issued which ended the guild system and established freedom of trade. The state tried to support traditional craft apprenticeships by providing accompanying offers at schools. During the 19th century Sunday school developed, which was completed alongside training in the master craftsperson’s company. From the mid-19th century, continuation schools were gradually introduced as a replacement for Sunday school, and it became compulsory for apprentices to attend such schools when the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act was amended in 1897. (GRÜBER 2004, p. 6 et seqq.)

During the First Republic (1918 to 1938), further framework conditions were established for dual vocational education and training, which improved the situation of the trainees (ban on night work, restriction on the weekly working hours). Works councils and also chambers of labour were set up too. These also represented the interests of apprentices. The Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act remained the legal basis for the company-based part of apprenticeship training for a long time. It was not until the Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz or BAG) was passed in 1970 that fundamental new framework conditions for dual vocational education and training were established, and these are still valid today: e.g. apprentices as employees, implementation of the BAG by apprenticeship offices, qualification requirements for trainers regulated with the introduction of an IVET trainer examination. (ibid., p. 8 et seqq.)

One particular national characteristic in Austria is the high share of full-time school-based vocational education and training: in the school year 2013/2014, 40% of pupils in the 10th grade were at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education (jointly referred to as Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen or BMHS), with around 37% at part-time vocational schools (Berufsschulen) as part of the dual system. This means that dual vocational education and training and full-time school-based training are roughly equal-sized pillars of the Austrian VET system. For comparison, the shares of pupils in full-time school-based training in Germany and Switzerland are clearly below 20% in many cases. (DORNMAYR/NOWAK 2014; EBNER/NIKOLAI 2010)

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3 Source: [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Oesterreich/Wirtschaft_node.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/Oesterreich/Wirtschaft_node.html), 19.05.2016
Socio-demographic aspects

- Parliamentary republic, consisting of nine federal provinces with a relatively high degree of federal structures. Education matters are mainly but not exclusively the responsibility of the Federal Government and are dealt with at the Education Ministry.

- Particular role of the social partnership – economic and socio-political cooperation between interest groups (employers, employees, government representatives) including in the area of education.

- Demographic development: increasing age of society; the percentage of people aged 65+ in the population in 2013 was 18%, with this figure expected to rise to over 21% by 2025.

- Unemployment rates: in Austria in all age categories there are significantly lower unemployment rates than the EU-28 average: 15- to 24-year-olds: Austria: 10.3%, EU-28: 22.2% (2014). (TRITSCHER-ARCHAN 2014)

- Around 80% of young people of a corresponding age cohort opt for vocational training, with 40% of these choosing dual training. (BMWF 2014, p. 4)

- According to CVTS 4, the share of companies offering initial vocational training in Austria in the survey year 2011 was 47%. (STATISTIK AUSTRIA 2013, p. 38)

- The three most commonly chosen apprenticeship occupations by young men in 2014 were metal technology (Metalltechnik), electrical engineering (Elektrotechnik) and motor vehicle engineering (Kraftfahrzeugtechnik); among young women these were retail trade services (Einzelhandel), office assistant (Bürokauffrau) and hairdresser and wig maker (stylist) (Friseurin und Perückenmacherin (Stylistin)). (BMWF 2014, p. 38 et seqq.)

Branch structure and size structure of the training companies

In Austria, at around 43%, by far the largest share of all apprentices in 2014 were in the sector “crafts and trades”, which also provided around 56% of all training companies in the same year. Next, with a share of 15% and 14% respectively, are the sectors trade and industry. (DORNMAYR/NOWAK 2015, p. 17,19,30) If we look at the figures according to economic segments, it can be seen that the sectors “production of goods” and “construction” are the most active in apprenticeship training: in each case, 30% of all businesses in the respective branch of trade were active in training in 2014. The share of employed apprentices among all employees in companies active in training in 2014 was highest in the sector “education and teaching” (around 34%); however, this high figure is because of the fact that this sector includes those institutions which train participants in supra-company apprenticeship training. If we do not take this economic segment into account, it is the training companies in the area of “other services” and also the construction industry which, proportionally, employ the highest number of apprentices measured by the total number of employees (14% and 12% respectively). (FRICK et al. 2015, p. 16,18)

In Austria in 2014, 35% of all apprentices were trained in companies with more than 250 employees. This means that 65% of apprentices are trained in companies with fewer than 250 employees (18% in companies with fewer than 10 employees). The share of trainees among the total number of employees is also higher in smaller companies: in those businesses with fewer than ten employees, this figure is 5.0%; in companies with between 10 and 49 employees this is as high as 5.4%; while this figure is just under 4% for companies with more than 50 employees.

Role of the public sector in apprenticeship training

In 2014, the public administration had an average level of participation in training with around 14% of the institutions active in training. The actual extent of employment created by these training activities is low, however: if we look at the share of apprentices among all employees in this sector, it is the lowest figure among all economic segments at around one percent. (ibid., p. 16,18)

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1.3. Germany
Economic structure
Germany is the biggest national economy in the European Union (EU) and the fourth biggest in the world. With the highest gross domestic product (GDP) and the highest population in the EU, Germany is the most important market in Europe. The GDP is around 2,920 billion euros (2014), with 0.6% of this coming from agriculture and forestry (primary sector), and 30.5 percent being generated in the producing industries including the construction industry (secondary sector) and 69% in the service sector. With more than 25 million people, small and medium-sized enterprises have the most employees and also provide the majority of training places for young people. At the same time, industry is an important pillar of the German economy – classic industrial production does not have such a comparatively significant role in any of the other traditional economies. It contributes around 37% to the German economic output. One area of specialisation is the development and manufacture of complex industrial goods, and in particular investment goods and innovative production technologies. The most important branches of industry are automotive engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and the chemical industry.5

Socio-economic context and historical development of dual vocational education and training
Apprenticeship training was introduced back in the 14th century by craft and commercial guilds, but then became less important at the start of the 19th century. Mainly on the initiative of private individuals, a number of part-time schools were set up in this period for apprentices and journeymen (continuation schools or Sunday schools), which were direct predecessors of today’s part-time vocational schools. From the 1920s, apprenticeship training was also carried out in industry, and from 1930 the chambers started holding exams for industrial apprentices. The industrial employers’ associations created a new kind of qualified labour force with the skilled worker (Facharbeiter). The traditional form of training for apprentices in crafts was passed down here, but teaching methods and forms of learning were adapted, however. First of all, the corporate associations determined the training regulations for apprenticeship training without the involvement of other interest groups. A milestone was therefore set in 1969 with the implementation of the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz or BBiG) as the interests of the state, employers and employees were taken into consideration together for the first time here. The Education Ministry also became a key player in the field of vocational education and training, which meant the influence of employers became limited.6
Partly as a result of this, dual vocational education and training also became widely accepted in Germany (and also in the other German-speaking countries) and was supported and financed by companies because the guilds had not been abolished as much as they had in countries such as France and the Netherlands. There were therefore powerful intermediary forces which were able to mediate between citizens and the state and enabled the introduction of a clearly structured vocational education and training system. Large-scale industry also helped with the spread of apprenticeship training: for this sector it proved useful to teach broad, standardised qualifications to trainees and therefore create transparency. (REINISCH/FROMMBERGER 2004, p. 32 et seqq.)

Socio-demographic aspects
• Parliamentary republic, consisting of 16 federal states (Länder), with a strong federal component. One particular feature is the significant role played by the Länder in education matters (“cultural sovereignty of the Länder”). In this context, there are ministries of education and cultural affairs in all Länder, and their main tasks include school supervision and school administration.
• Demographic development: increasing age of society; the percentage of people aged 65+ in the population is 21% (2013), with this figure expected to rise to 29% by 2030.7

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6 Source: http://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/arbeitsmarktpolitik/187850/duales-system, 23.05.2016
• Unemployment rates: in Germany in all age categories there are significantly lower unemployment rates than the EU-28 average: 15- to 24-year-olds: Germany: 7.7%, EU-28: 22.2% (2014).8

• Around 56% of an age cohort takes up dual vocational education and training each year. (BIBB, no date, p. 4).

• According to CVTS 4 (Continuing Vocational Training Survey), 62% of companies provided initial vocational training in Germany in the survey year 2011. (VOLLMAR 2013, p. 9)

• The three most common training occupations chosen by young men in 2014 were motor vehicle mechatronics technician (Kraftfahrzeugmechatroniker), industrial mechanic (Industriemechaniker) and management assistant for retail services (Kaufmann im Einzelhandel). For young women these were office manager (Kauffrau für Büromanagement), sales assistant (Verkäuferin) and management assistant for retail services (Kauffrau im Einzelhandel). (BIBB 2015, p. 1).

Branch structure and size structure of the training companies
The way the economic sectors are grouped in the individual countries means the available figures for Germany can only be compared to a very limited extent with the results from Liechtenstein, Austria and Switzerland.

In Germany in 2014, the largest share of trainees could be found in the occupational area “raw material extraction, production and manufacturing” with a third of all apprentices overall. The biggest groups within this area were “automotive, aeronautical, aerospace and naval engineering”, energy engineering and also “mechanical and production engineering”. The biggest individual occupational group in terms of figures, however, is “sales (without product specialisations)” with more than 100,000 trainees. (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015, p. 150 et seqq.)

The involvement of companies in training in Germany increases with the number of employees: in 2008, the share of companies active in training which had fewer than ten employees did not quite reach 17%. Around 66% of all companies with between 50 and 99 employees were active as training companies, with this figure rising to around 87% for large businesses (250+ employees).9 If we compare the share of trainees with the total number of employees in the companies (= training ratio), the situation in Germany in 2013 is different than in Austria and Switzerland (see below for comparative figures): while the training ratio in very small businesses with fewer than ten employees is at 3%, it increases to around 4% in all other business sizes (small businesses, medium-sized businesses and large businesses). In the average of all businesses the training ratio is 4%. (IAB 2014, p. 3)

Overall in Germany in 2013, 29% of the trainees were trained in large businesses with more than 250 employees. 18% of all trainees were trained in very small businesses with a maximum of 9 employees. The majority of training (53%) was carried out in small and medium-sized businesses with between 10 and 249 employees.10

Role of the public sector in apprenticeship training
For Germany, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) calculated a training ratio of 3.3% in the public sector for the end of June 2013. There was a higher than average number of apprenticeships at the federal level (around six percent), while this figure was under three percent at the Länder level. Another statistic of the Ministry of the Interior for mid-October 2013 gives a training ratio of a little over seven percent in the public sector.11

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1.4. Liechtenstein

Socio-economic context and historical development of dual vocational education and training

The historical development of the Principality of Liechtenstein is closely linked with that of its neighbours Austria and, in particular, Switzerland. This is also the case with vocational and professional education and training (VET and PET, also referred to as VPET) matters and their institutional implementation. VPET did not develop until after the general school system and developed largely independently of this. The first major development boost came after the end of the Second World War as a consequence of the rapidly increasing economic growth. Before this, the creation of a vocational and professional education and training system had not been a priority, on account of the largely rural economic structure, the insignificant role of crafts and trades and also the relatively late industrialisation. (NIGSCH ET AL. 1997, p. 11)

The School Act (Schulgesetz) which came into force in 1929 meant that, for the first time, there was a legal basis for training apprentices. At the time Liechtenstein also considered setting up its own VET schools. But, on account of the limited resources in the country, people realised it was necessary to cooperate with Switzerland. This close cooperation still plays a key role in determining the way dual vocational education and training works in the principality. This is also the case with aspects of funding, for example. In the past, Liechtenstein provided financial assistance for setting up and running VET schools in Switzerland. (ibid., p. 11 et seq.)

The first Apprenticeship Act (Lehrlingsgesetz) of the Principality of Liechtenstein dates back to 1936 and established the dual basic structure of initial vocational training. This law regulated the obligation to attend vocational school (Gewerbeschule) and taking the final apprenticeship examination in particular. The first Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act or VPETA (Berufsbildungsgesetz or BBG) was implemented in 1976. The law comprised regulations regarding the organisation of (initial) vocational training, continuing education and training and retraining as well as aspects of funding. A key component of the law is the regulations which enable young people from Liechtenstein to attend (vocational) schools in other countries. (ibid., p. 12)

The VPETA was completely revised in 2006 and was implemented again in 2008: this was done mainly in order to develop in line with corresponding developments in Switzerland and to keep as similar as possible terminology in the vocational and professional education and training of the two countries. (RESSORT BILDUNGSWESEN 2006, p. 7 et seqq.)

Socio-demographic aspects

- Liechtenstein is a hereditary constitutional monarchy on a democratic and parliamentary basis and consists of eleven municipalities. (Stabstelle für Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit 2009, p. 34)
- While there are enough training companies to carry out training in around 80 different professions in the country itself, young people generally go to VET schools (Berufsfachschulen) in Switzerland for their theoretical vocational training. This means intensive and extensive cooperation in the field of education is required with Switzerland.13 (Ressort Bildungswesen 2006, p. 7)
- On average, 60% to 70% of an age cohort (350 to 400 school leavers) begins a two-, three- or four-year apprenticeship each year. There are currently just over 1,200 registered training relationships. Every year an average of 400 young people complete their apprenticeship training with a qualification procedure (final initial VET examination).14
- Demographic development: increasing age of society; the percentage of people aged 65+ in the population in 2015 was around 18%, with this figure expected to rise to around 23% by 2025.15

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12 The Liechtenstein VET system is covered in the other chapters with the descriptions of the Swiss system. Only in exceptional cases is there direct reference to the Liechtenstein VET system.

13 Source: www.liechtenstein.li/bildung/berufsbildung/, 23.10.2015

14 ibid., 23.10.2015

15 Source: www.llv.li/#/1312
• Unemployment rates: in August 2015 the overall unemployment rate was 2.3%. Among young people (aged 15 to 24) the rate was 2.9% according to the Liechtenstein Public Employment Service (AMS FL).\textsuperscript{16} 
• The three most commonly selected initial VET courses in 2014 were management assistant (\textit{Kaufleute}), computer scientist (\textit{Informatiker/in}), multi-skilled mechanic (\textit{Polymechaniker/in}). (2015, p. 169).

Branch structure and size structure of the training companies
In the apprenticeship year 2014/15 a total of 1,183 learners were trained in 328 training companies in Liechtenstein. 68.7% of these learners are resident in Liechtenstein, 30.0% in Switzerland and 1.3% in Austria. In addition, 118 learners from Liechtenstein were trained in companies in Switzerland. In total, 931 apprenticeship contracts were therefore registered for learners from Liechtenstein. The most popular training areas were the metal and machining industry at 30.2% and the educational field of organisation, administration and office work at 20.3%. In the other 19 educational fields, the share of registrations was less than 10% of the apprenticeship contracts in each case. (\textit{AMT FÜR STATISTIK}, no date, p. 19 et seq.) There is a downward trend in the number of training companies. Compared to the training year 2006/07 (first available figures), the number of companies active in training fell by 16% from 389 to 328. (ibid., p. 20) Almost half of the training companies (159) train only one learner. 21 training companies employ 10 or more learners, with three of these employing at least 50 learners. (ibid., p. 80) On average, therefore, 3.6 learners are trained per training company. The training ratio as the proportion of learners to the total number of jobs was 6.2% in 2014 and, on average, it is therefore relatively clearly above the figure for the countries of comparison Germany, Austria and Switzerland. (ibid., p. 150)

Role of the public sector in apprenticeship training
Based on the available education statistics, it is not possible to say anything about the importance of the public sector as a training provider in apprenticeship training in Liechtenstein.

\textsuperscript{16} Source: \url{www.amsfl.li/ams/startseite}
1.5. Switzerland

Economic structure

Switzerland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. In 2014, the GDP was around 640 billion Swiss francs, meaning Switzerland was in eighth place among the most economically powerful countries in Europe. 0.8% of the created value is in the agriculture and forestry sector, with 26.3% being generated by industry and the construction trade and 73% by services. The industry is export-oriented, with focuses on chemistry and the pharmaceutical industry, the machine, electrical and metal industries and also precision mechanics (in particular watches/clocks, jewellery and medical precision instruments). Switzerland has now also become successfully established in the field of environmental protection technologies. Some 75% of the working population, i.e. around three million people, work in the services sector. With a share of around ten percent of the GDP (2014) and around 200,000 jobs (approximately six percent of the total employees), the finance sector represents an important pillar of the economy but has become slightly less important in the last few years. The international commodity trade generates extremely high export revenue which now exceeds the revenue of the banking industry.

Socio-economic context and historical development of dual vocational education and training

Beginning in the 13th century, artisans in the towns formed guilds which also regulated the professional education and training of the next generation of professionals. The collapse of the Old Swiss Confederacy following the French Revolution also led to the end of the guild system and the regulation of professional education and training. At the start of the 19th century, the guilds were again granted certain rights, the extent of which varied from canton to canton: in some mountain cantons and in parts of French-speaking Switzerland in the west of the country, the guilds were never as influential as they were in the city cantons, which explains the different development and organisation of vocational and professional education and training in the German-speaking and French-speaking parts of Switzerland. (WETTSTEIN 2005, p. 1 et seqq.)

As a response to a long-lasting recession during the 1870s, local craft and trade associations emerged, which, at the federal level, merged into the Swiss Association for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. This formed professional associations which began drawing up regulations for apprentices. These included, for example, a standardisation of the agreements between the apprenticeship trainer and the apprentice with the introduction of an apprenticeship contract (1889), the promotion of theoretical training alongside the apprenticeship at part-time schools and the introduction of apprentice exams. In 1930, the first federal law on vocational and professional education and training transferred supervision of the final apprenticeship examination to the Federal Government, with execution transferred to the cantons or the professional associations. The law applied to VPET in the areas of trade, transport, crafts, industry and the catering and hotel sector, and stipulated a minimum apprenticeship period of one year and also monitoring by cantonal inspectors or intermediate examinations. (ibid., p. 5 et seq.)

After revisions of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act or VPETA (Berufsbildungsgesetz or BBG) in 1963 and 1980, the currently valid VPETA finally came into force in 2004. With this, all professions were standardised for the first time outside of universities, meaning they could be compared with each other. The new VPETA promotes permeability in the (vocational) education and training system, defines higher VET (known as PET in Switzerland) in the non-university area, introduces performance-oriented funding and gives more on-site responsibility to the local stakeholders. 17

One specific feature of the system in Switzerland is the VPET funds (Berufsbildungsfonds), which, according to the VPETA, are geared towards a specific branch of trade and use solidarity contributions to financially integrate businesses which do not participate in the costs of vocational and professional education and training. On request, the Federal Government can declare VPET funds to be generally obligatory for the entire branch of trade. 18

there are also cantonal VPET funds which cover all those branches of trade that are not subject to a sector fund. (WETTSTEIN/SCHMID/GONEN 2014, p. 153)

Socio-demographic aspects

- Federal republic with a high level of local and regional autonomy and also strong elements of direct democracy, consisting of 26 partly sovereign cantons (each with their own constitutions) and four linguistic regions.
- One of the few countries which does not have an education ministry. General education matters are mainly located at the cantonal level, with vocational and professional education and training under the regulatory authority of the Federal Government. VPET according to the VPETA is a joint task of the Federal Government, cantons and professional organisations, while the cantons are responsible for the implementation of initial VET.
- Demographic development: increasing age of society; the percentage of people aged 65+ in the population is 18% (2014), with this figure expected to rise to around 23% by 2030.\(^{19}\)
- Unemployment rates: a total of around 3% (2014), among 15- to 24-year-olds this figure varies depending on the canton (between 1% and 6%), overall around 3% (2014).\(^{20}\)
- Around 2/3 of young people complete a dual VET programme after their compulsory schooling period. (SBFI 2016, p. 4)
- A survey from 2009 (costs and benefits for training companies) determined that out of all the suitable companies, more than 40% actually offered training. (STRUPLER/WOLTER 2012, p. 3)
- In 2012 in Switzerland, the three most commonly selected initial VET programmes with the Federal VET Diploma (Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis or EFZ) among young men were management assistant (Kaufmann), electrician (Elektroinstallateur) and retail trade specialist (Detailhandelsfachmann); among young women these were management assistant (Kauffrau), retail trade specialist (Detailhandelsfachfrau) and health specialist (Fachfrau Gesundheit).\(^{21}\)

Branch structure and size structure of the training companies

In Switzerland there is data available on this theme from a survey from 2008. The construction sector – similar to in Austria – also had one of the highest figures of all economic sectors in Switzerland in 2008 with a training participation rate of 28%. With a training participation rate of 32% in 2008, the economic segment “public administration, defence, social security” was, interestingly, the sector which was most active in training in Switzerland. Measured by the number of employees overall, however, it was the construction trade which stands out with apprentices accounting for a 10% share of all employees – the highest figure of all sectors. This also corresponds with the Austrian results, which suggests “that the training activities are also characterised by the intensity of labour and the intensity of technology used for production in a sector. Construction and trade / repair industry are labour-intensive areas in which the use of learners is clearly worthwhile.” (MÜLLER/SCHWERI 2012, p. 40)

In Switzerland the business census data from 2008 also reveals that participation in training greatly increases as the size of the company increases. While a maximum of around a third of micro-enterprises (fewer than 10 employees) offer training, with companies of between 100 and 149 employees this share is as high as two thirds. The training intensity of the host companies, however, greatly decreases as the size of the company increases: the share of apprentices among the total number of staff in companies with fewer than 10 employees was between 7.5% and 9%, in the case of companies with 50-99 employees this figure was 4.4%, and companies with 1,000+ employees had a share of 3.3%. (ibid., p. 38)

Generally, in Switzerland in 2008 more than 2/3 of learners (around 70%) were trained in companies with fewer than 50 employees, i.e. in small businesses and micro-enterprises. Large businesses with more than 250 employees trained only around 11% of the learners. (ibid., p. 39)


\(^{20}\) Ibid.

Role of the public sector in apprenticeship training

In Switzerland there is a similar picture to the one in Austria. According to the business census 2008, while 32% of all institutions in the sector “public administration, defence, social security” were active in training, the share of apprentices among the total number of employees was only 4.6%, however (in contrast with 10% in the construction sector and 8% in trade, for example).
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