

The project “Pospolu” (Together) will foster cooperation between schools and enterprises

In December 2012, a project “Fostering Cooperation between Schools and Enterprises with Focus on Vocational Education and Training in Practice” under an acronym “Pospolu” (Together) has been launched. The aim of the project is to promote cooperation between secondary schools and employers and to design and test the optimal system of cooperation of these partners in selected fields of secondary education. The project is co-financed from the European Social Fund and will run until June 30, 2015. It has been prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in cooperation with employers’ associations and is being implemented by the National Institute for Education.

Based on discussions with social partners, a cooperative model for vocational education and training has been proposed. The model consists of three pillars on which cooperation between schools and enterprises should be based – vocational education and training itself, legislation and funding. It also features some dual system elements.

The cooperative model consists of particular generic models of cooperation between schools and enterprises for the fields of study concluded by Maturita examination and for the fields of study with apprenticeship certificate. Based on the generic models, specific models of cooperation for all groups of fields of study will be gradually developed in the course of the project. Eventually, there will be a total of 56 models of cooperation, which will be complemented by good practice examples of specific schools and practical experiences acquired during pilot testing carried out by 25 partner schools and enterprises.

Within the project, schools could participate in the development of the generic, but particularly of the specific applied models of cooperation related to the groups of fields of study included in their own curricula, either during the phase of creating or subsequent commenting. The form of applied models will be developed in the course of the whole project. A school may, together with the enterprise with which it has established cooperation, participate in a tender for pilot testing of these models. In such a case, the school and the enterprise jointly prepare, in line with the terms and conditions of the tender, a proposal for pilot testing in their environment. An important benefit for the project and consequently also for the whole system of VET will be the detailed feedback acquired from pilot testing of cooperation between schools and enterprises from the entire country in terms of possibilities and limits of mutual cooperation under the existing legislation.

Schools may also participate in the creation of methodological and educational materials fostering the implementation of different forms of teaching in the corporate environment (e.g. practical training, internships, vocational training, etc.), helping to define the needs in this area and participate in the processing of materials. School representatives may also take part in training seminars that will be organised in order to support the implementation of the created models in practice. Seminars will take place starting the school year 2013/2014.

Creation of examples of optimal cooperation between schools and employers while securing practical training at employers’ premises will be the main benefit of the project for the leading educators as well as other school staff. The project will also enhance mutual trust between schools and employers. Within the framework of practical training, students will get familiar with the real work environment while acquiring practical skills and self-confidence improving their ability to find an employment and enter the world of work after concluding their studies. Schools’ involvement in the project will strengthen their position within the region. The use of elements of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the project will create conditions fostering learning mobility of students also at the national level and the use of units of learning will improve transparency of collaboration between schools, students and enterprises.

Further information available at: www.projektpospolu.cz