

Report on the European Automotive Apprenticeship Marketplace

Executive Policy Summary

I. The project

The vehicle of the future will no longer function solely as a mode of transportation. Car usage behavior, electrification, sharing, autonomy and connectivity are all fundamentally shifting the automotive sector's vision towards the integration of services around the product itself.

In the face of such seismic change, *The Development and Research on Innovative Vocational Education Skills (DRIVES)* project was commissioned to try and support the future-proofing of skills, leveraging the strengths of EU workforce and allowing continued competitiveness on a global scale. Running from January 2018 until December 2021, the project brings together 24 partners from 11 EU countries with a large automotive presence including the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy.

A key aim of the *DRIVES* project is to identify ways of supporting the creation of an effective apprenticeship market serving the automotive sector. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to develop a clear and common understanding of the current apprenticeship marketplace, both in terms of the different models currently operating and the key challenges faced in relation to addressing changing skill requirements and tackling impediments to mobility of labour within the sector.

II. The Framework

Given the fast pace of industry change, skills grow obsolete quickly. This means that it is difficult for providers to keep abreast of changing skill requirements and that future skill requirements are difficult for employers to predict. Therefore, the apprenticeship offer needs to be flexible enough to respond to these changes.

In parallel with the need of supporting new entrants, the upskilling of existing employees is also of utmost importance. This implies the need for appropriately tailored training but also the need to maximize the potential for apprenticeships to support upskilling and provide clear learning pathways between different levels to facilitate continuous upskilling.

The common skills challenges faced across the EU automotive supply chain underline the importance of improving mobility of labour through improved qualification recognition between Member States. This highlights the need for a close and continued dialogue between employers in the sector together with schools, colleges, universities and other providers of apprenticeship

training to ensure the apprenticeship offer evolves in line with these changing skills requirements.

III. What impacts the sector:

Within the current apprenticeship market serving the EU automotive sector, there are a number of issues that impact significantly on the sector, such as:

- 1) The implications of digitalisation;
- 2) The need to attract a higher level of applicants in order to be able to learn rapidly as jobs evolve and also the need to revise qualifications to take account of these changes;
- 3) Labour mobility is currently further restricted by wide inter-country variations in terms of the apprenticeship models adopted, but also in terms of patterns of school-company alternation, typical duration of apprenticeships, volume of in-company training per year, requirements placed on both employers and wider labour market stakeholders and age and educational level eligibility criteria;
- 4) Understanding and comparing different apprenticeship offers across different EU countries is currently a significant challenge.

These challenges require innovative solutions such as:

- 1) Establish a central resource enabling access to examples of good practice in terms of apprenticeship design and delivery within the automotive sector in partnership with key stakeholders and building on existing resources;
- 2) Establish an intelligence service to track skills changes for employers and providers and act as an accessible resource for both employers and providers;
- 3) Establish an Apprenticeship comparison tool to try and help both employers and individuals to navigate the apprenticeship landscape and compare offers in different countries;
- 4) Adopt more innovative ways of designing apprenticeships such as ensuring increased flexibility, just in time design to respond to rapid skill changes and making sure the apprenticeship offer supports upskilling of existing employees as well as new entrants to the sector.