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Initial Vocational Training in Austria

1. Introduction

Overview

The public system of initial vocational training (IVT):

- In Austria there are two trajectories of IVT: On the one hand, the school based IVT scheme, on the other hand, the dual system. Students pursuing an apprenticeship are partly educated in state financed schools, where they learn the theoretical aspects of their job, and partly within the companies, where they gain practical experience. The costs for the dual training are partly carried by the state, which pays for the schools, and partly by the companies, that pay the salaries of the trainees (BMWA 2010: Finanzierung der Lehre).
 - Approximately 40 per cent of young people pursue an apprenticeship. The duration of the apprenticeship may vary between two and four years (BMWA 2010: Berufsausbildung in der Lehre).
 - The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the school element of apprentice training. It includes drafting legislative bills and setting up framework curricula. It shares the cost of teachers' pay with the *Länder* (Archan/Mayr 2006: 20). Social partners are involved at the federal as well as at the regional level. The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (*Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat*) is established by

the Vocational Training Act. It comprises representatives of employers' and employees' organizations and of part-time schools. The board presents to the Ministry of Economics and Labor proposals in the form of expert reports on matters such as the introduction of new apprenticeship trades or the changes of current trades (Archan/Mayr 2006: 20).

- The Regional Advisory Boards on Apprenticeship (*Landes-Berufsausbildungsbeiräte*), which involves representatives of employers' associations as well as trade unions, makes suggestions regarding apprentice training in their respective *Länder* (Archan/Mayr 2006: 21).
- 'The *Länder* are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of part-time schools for apprentices and meet half of the expenditure on personnel [...]' (Archan/Mayr 2006: 21).

The role of collective labor agreements (CLAs) in IVT:

- General matters concerning wages and working conditions are regulated within collective agreements. The salary increases each year of the apprenticeship and in average amount to about 80 per cent of the salary of a fully educated worker (Archan/Mayr 2006: 35; Eurofound 2009). CLAs also regulate the entitlement to as well as the amount of special payments such as Christmas allowance or grants for vacation.
- In case the amount of the apprenticeship allowance is not regulated by a collective agreement, it is agreed upon in the training contract.
- The apprenticeship allowance is paid during the entire apprenticeship, at the time when the apprentice learns at school, works in the company and during the final apprenticeship examination (AK.portal 2010).
- There are no funds set up by CLAs in order to finance IVT.

Levels of Bargaining

Main regulations of IVT in CLAs occur at sectoral level (see examples in section 2).

Actors

Main trade unions that are involved in the negotiation of IVT in CLAs, according to the agreements mentioned in section 2:

- Chamber of Labour (*Bundeskammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte*),
- Trade Union of the Metal and Textile (*Gewerkschaft Metall-Textil-Nahrung*),
- Trade Union of the Construction and Wood (*Gewerkschaft Bau-Holz*),
- Trade Union of the Employees in the Private Sector (*Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten*, GPA).

Main employers' organizations that are involved in the negotiation of IVT in CLAs, according to the agreements mentioned in section 2:

- Chamber of Agriculture (*Landwirtschaftskammer Österreich*),
- Federation of Austrian Industry (*Industriellenvereinigung*),
- Employers' Association of the Machines and Metal Industry (*Fachverband Maschinen & Metallwaren Industrie*),
- Employers' Association of the Wood Industry (*Fachverband der Holzindustrie Österreichs*).

Critical Junctures

Definition: Critical junctures are time periods or years when important decisions on the development of the collectively negotiated IVT scheme were made.

We have not found any evidence.

2. Important Collective Agreements (Examples)

- Collective agreement for employees of the metalworking industry (*Kollektivvertrag für Arbeiter im eisen- und metallverarbeitenden Gewerbe, 1.1.2009 and 1.1.2010, reissue and completion of the agreement of 1st of September 1948*)
 - It is a sectoral agreement.
 - It applies to all the workers of the following branches: locksmiths, technicians, blacksmith, plumpers, coppersmiths, metal design, surface engineering, pour, sanitarians, heating- and ventilation technicians, electro- and communication, mechatronic engineers, vehicles, gold- and silver smiths, jewelers, watchmakers, opticians, orthopaedic technicians, hearing aid technicians, automobile workers, machines and metal.
 - It regulates wages and working conditions for all employees (apprentices included).
 - In 2009 and 2010 there is an increase of wages and apprenticeship allowance.
- Collective agreement for employees of the timber industry (*Kollektivvertrag abgeschlossen zwischen dem Fachverband der Holzindustrie Österreichs einerseits und dem Österreichischen Gewerkschaftsbund, Gewerkschaft Bau-Holz, andererseits. 1.06.2009*)
 - It is a sectoral agreement.

- It applies to all workers of wood fiber and flake board industry.
- It regulates wages and working conditions (except for working hours) for all employees (apprentices included).
- Collective agreement for employees and apprentices in commerce (*Kollektivvertrag für Angestellte und Lehrlinge in Handelsbetrieben, 1.1.2006*)
 - It is a sectoral agreement.
 - It applies to employees and apprentices in the section commerce of the Austrian Chamber of Trade, Commerce, and Industry (*Österreichische Wirtschaftskammer*) as well as to employees and apprentices of companies belonging to the association of insurance broker and insurance consultants (*Fachverband der Versicherungsmakler und Berater in Versicherungsangelegenheiten*) association of Media Management (*Fachverband Buch- und Medienwirtschaft*).
 - It regulates wages and working conditions (apprentices included).

3. Important sectors

- Commerce (450,000 employees),
- construction industry (*Bauindustrie und Baugewerbe, allgemeinnützige Wohnungswirtschaft*),
- metal industry (170,000 employees) (GPA-djp 2009).

4. Structure, Organization, and Mode of Administration

We have not found any evidence on sectoral funds on IVT in Austria.

5. Role of the State: Financial Support, Legislation, and Extension Procedures

- The state recognizes companies who offer apprenticeships by supporting them with 1000 EUR annually per trainee. This is meant as a refund of salary for the days the trainee spends at school. Additionally, the state subsidizes 100 per cent of the contributions for health care in the first two years of the apprenticeship and 100 per cent of the contributions for accident insurance during the whole apprenticeship (BMW 2010: Finanzierung der Lehre).

6. Financial Structure of the Collectively Negotiated Schemes

- No IVT funds exist in Austria (Ebner 2009: 6).

7. Benefits and Measures of the Collectively Negotiated Schemes

- Wages (minimum wage per branch/sector), working hours (38.5 hours per week normal working time), overtime, holidays, as well as additional allowances are regulated by collective agreements.
- Apprenticeship allowance is staggered by year of apprenticeship and the region (*Gehaltsgebiet*), as well as between sectors.

8. Coverage Rates of the Collectively Negotiated Schemes

- We have not found comprehensive data on that point. In general, however, the coverage rates of collective agreements are relatively high in Austria: For example, in 2001, the adjusted coverage rate was 98 per cent in Austria (related to the number of employees covered) (Traxler/Behrens 2002: Aggregate Coverage). Furthermore, one can cite as an example that the collective agreement for employees and apprentices in commerce applies to most of the employees, i.e. about 450,000 employees and apprentices (Mandel 2007).

9. The Politics Around the Collectively Negotiated Schemes

Linkages to Public Reform Policies

We have not found any evidence.

Linkage to Wage Agreements and Wage Policy (e.g. Wage Restraint, Tripartite Agreements) and Other Agreements

We have not found any evidence.

10. Recent Developments and Other Interesting Information

We have not found any evidence.

11. Contacted Experts

No expert was contacted.

12. List of Abbreviations

- AK.portal: *Portal der Arbeitskammern*
- BMWA: *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit* (Federal Ministry of Economy and Labor)
- CLA: collective labor agreement
- EUR: Euro
- Eurofound: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
- GPA-djp: *Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten. Druck, Journalismus, Papier* (Trade Union of the Employees in the Private Sector. Print, Journalism, Paper)
- IVT: initial vocational training

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