QSE·VET
Evidence based

Quality standards for evidence-based vocational education: indicator 5 and 6 of EQAVET

Work Package 3: Awareness-raising

Deliverable 3.1

Aggregated Report

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Content

Executive summary

The 44 respondents from Italy, Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Poland, Spain, Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden give a good overview on the current practices and their judgment of a number of the statements regarding their quality assurance approach to relevant aspects of Evidence-based VET presented below.

Their main proposals for future action are focused around the communication between enterprises and VET providers:

- to develop standards or methods for how to translate the demands into learning objectives
- to develop a tool or method so providers and employers can make a joint translation of skills in a VET program
- to develop the part regarding key competences and to develop teachers training and training materials.
- we need to develop a common terminology specially regarding curricula
- we need to develop a common language for VET providers and enterprises: a common syllabus would be needed, and we need to develop same references or technology

These proposals are grounded in the analysis of the answers to the following statements:

The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs.

The overall accumulated results show relatively big differences between the countries.

13 % disagree and state that their VET system is not good at predicting future skills needs, where 59% find that their VET system is good at it.

The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages.

20 % disagree and 52 % either agree or strongly agree.

Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies

23 % of the total respondents disagree with the statement and 28 % neither agree nor disagree. It leaves almost half of the respondents (49 %) stating that they agree or strongly .

Learners can be confident that you/VET providers are good at making sure your/their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market.

Totally shows the results that 90 % of all the respondents agree or strongly agree in, that learners can be confident in the relevance of the delivered programs.

VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers/companies – and have a system for making sure of this.

Totally shows the results that 67 % of the respondents agree or strongly agree in this statement. Only 5 % disagree and 28 % neither agree nor disagree.

> *You/VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills/core competences that employers need?*

Totally shows the results that 87 % agree and strongly agree in the statement, and only 5 % disagree and 8 % neither agree nor disagree.

> *Learners can be confident that you/VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET.*

Totally shows the results that 74 % agree and strongly agree in the statement and only 8 % disagree and 18 % neither agree nor disagree.

> *You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs?*

Totally shows the results that 84 % agrees in that the VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective VET is to meeting their needs. Only 3 % neither agree nor disagree and 13 % disagree.

1. Introduction to the Quality standards for evidence-based vocational education project

The Quality standards for evidence-based vocational education (QSE) project sets out to develop guidelines, with relevant operational indicators and best practices, to provide a basis for supporting European policy development of EQAVET, especially with regards to indicators 5 and 6.

EQAVET is an approach to quality assurance in VET (vocational education and training) which has been agreed by European Union member states. It is not a separate 'quality system', but is rather a 'reference framework' that has been developed at the European level. This means that those who are responsible for planning or providing VET systems – or individual VET providers – have specific approaches and indicators to which they can refer .

EQAVET has 10 indicators; the QSE project is directly concerned with two – 5 and 6.

- Indicator 5 – 'Placement rate in VET programmes'.
  This refers to the destinations of those that complete (or do not complete) VET provision, including how many of them find (relevant) employment.

- Indicator 6 – ' Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace'.
  This refers to the degree of satisfaction recorded by employers and learners in terms of the relevance of the skills and competences that were acquired through the VET provision.

Evidence-based
In the QSE project, when we refer to 'evidence-based' we are referring specifically to questions such as:

- How do you know that **the skills being provided** (e.g. by a particular VET intitution or programme) **are relevant to the skills demanded by employers** (companies and industry)?

- Where does the evidence come from for this purpose?

- How is the evidence obtained?

- How is the evidence used?

To develop new guidance that will inform the policy process for EQAVET in relation to the indicators 5 and 6, the QSE project undertakes a number of activities, specifically:

- Raising awareness of the 'evidence-based' issue (WP3) – by consultation and engagement (interviews and workshops with guidance material)

- Identifying, through the gathering and study of specific data, the state of the art - and developing a software-led solution to support competency mapping, led by the needs of employers (WP4)

- Design, test and validate this solution, and provide guidance on the development of evidence-based approaches (WPs 5 and 6)

At this point in the project, we are at the beginning – raising awareness, consulting and engaging.

This report build on the following materials:
- Assessment interview guide for the stakeholders regarding their quality assurance approach to relevant aspects of Evidence-based VET by FACO, April 2018
- Background Paper for the interviewguide by FACO, April 2018
- Country Report - Sweden by Folkuniversitetet, December 2018
- Country Report - Italy by fb finance & banking, November 2018
- Country Report - Greece by DIMITRA, December 2018
- Country Report - Ireland by QQI & FACO, November 2018
- Country Report - Denmark by FACO, November 2018

2. Methodology

We decided to collect the data through interviews with VET providers and other stakeholders directly involved in vocational education and training in the different countries.

The activity plan was revised a number of times before we ended up with the following:

- All partners interview at minimum 10 VET-providers
- The interviews starts from June/July 2018
- Partners have finalized and mailed their interviews at the 1st of December, 2018
- Each partner make a short country report summarizing the results from the interviews
- The final draft report will be finalized February 2019 by FACO/Kim Faurschou

We decided to follow the same structure and topics for the questions, and let each partner decide who to interview and when. We made no restrictions on programs or sectors but searched for answers across a number of sectors, educational areas and different types and size of the VET providers.

2.1 Interview guide

The interview guide for stakeholders regarding their quality assurance approach to relevant aspects of Evidence-based VET have been developed after internal discussions among the partners led by FACO.

We agreed in to presents the respondents for a number of statements and ask them all

==“To what degree do you agree in the following statements?” measured on a scale from Strongly disagree to strongly agree.==

☐ Strongly Disagree   ☐ Disagree   ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Strongly Agree

The answers will hopefully be a good "warm-up" for the interview person, and make it clear that we are not only looking for the "beauties" but also for the "realities."

The answers was always followed up by asking the respondent: *Please justify your choice*. A number of follow-up questions was included in the interview guide, in order to help the interviewer with getting the information we search for and to open the respondent to these issues and topics.

2.2 Respondents

Each partner selected the respondents and did the interviews.

Partner	Interviews
Folkuniversitet Uppsala Sweden	10 interviews across Sweden. Cover different sectors and different size of provider organisation.
fb finance & banking Italy	9 interviews 6 Italian + one from Poland, Spain and Lithuania Cover different regions, countries, sectors and types of providers
DIMITRA Greece	10 interviews across Greece Cover both public and private VET providers
FACO Denmark	10 interviews across Ireland 4 interviews across Denmark Cover different sectors, public and private VET providers

Ireland was chosen instead of Denmark, because the Danish answers was very similar to the Swedish and would therefore not give additional value to our analysis. The four Danish interviews that was made are integrated in the presentation of the results of the other countries.

3. Context

The project partners has intense discussions regarding both the unit of analysis and the differences in contexts across the partners at both the first transnational meeting in the project in Larissa, Greece in February 2018 and later in the second transnational meeting of the partnership October 2018 in Rome, Italy.

Most of the Country reports have a short introduction of the system for vocational education and training in the different countries, so this part of the context will not be described further here.

The answers presented in the following chapter show, that most of the answers can be used across the different general national contexts and that most VET providers face the same challenges and might benefit from the inspiration from each other.

4. Results

This chapter will I detail present the results of all the interviews made by the project partners in both Italy, Greece, Sweden and Ireland as well as in Denmark.

The presentation follows the structure from the interview guide and presents first the total figures and then the national one. There is a special focus on the motivations presented and the comments made by the respondents. These detailed opinions from all the respondents are valuable for the direction of our next steps in the QSE-VET project.

The responses will be used to develop guidelines, with relevant operational indicators and best practices, to provide a basis for supporting European policy development of EQAVET, especially with regards to the EQAVET indicators 5 and 6 regarding placement rate and utilization of acquired skills at the workplace.

The chapter will cover the following headlines

- *Predicting future skills*
- *Avoiding skills shortage*
- *VET dynamic?*
- *Learner confidence*
- *Authority requirements*
- *Teaching and training*
- *Employers involvement*
- *Evaluation of effectiveness*
- *Tools and suggestions for improvements*
    - *Improvements*
    - *Curricula*
    - *Job ready*
    - *New teaching styles*
    - *Alternative approaches to employers*
    - *Follow up on learners*
    - *Transparence challenge*
    - *Common language*
    - *Employers involvement*
- *Transfer of experiences*

The chapter will in the final section present a short conclusion of all the topics above based on the analysis of the answers supplied by the more than 40 respondents from several EU member states.

4.1 Predicting future skills

One of the basic expectations most stakeholders have to every VET system is, that they are good at predicting the future skills needs. But is this really the situation in all countries? And how is this possible to achieve, organize and measure?

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:

The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs.

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

The overall accumulated results show very different opinions from the respondents, as seen in the figure below.
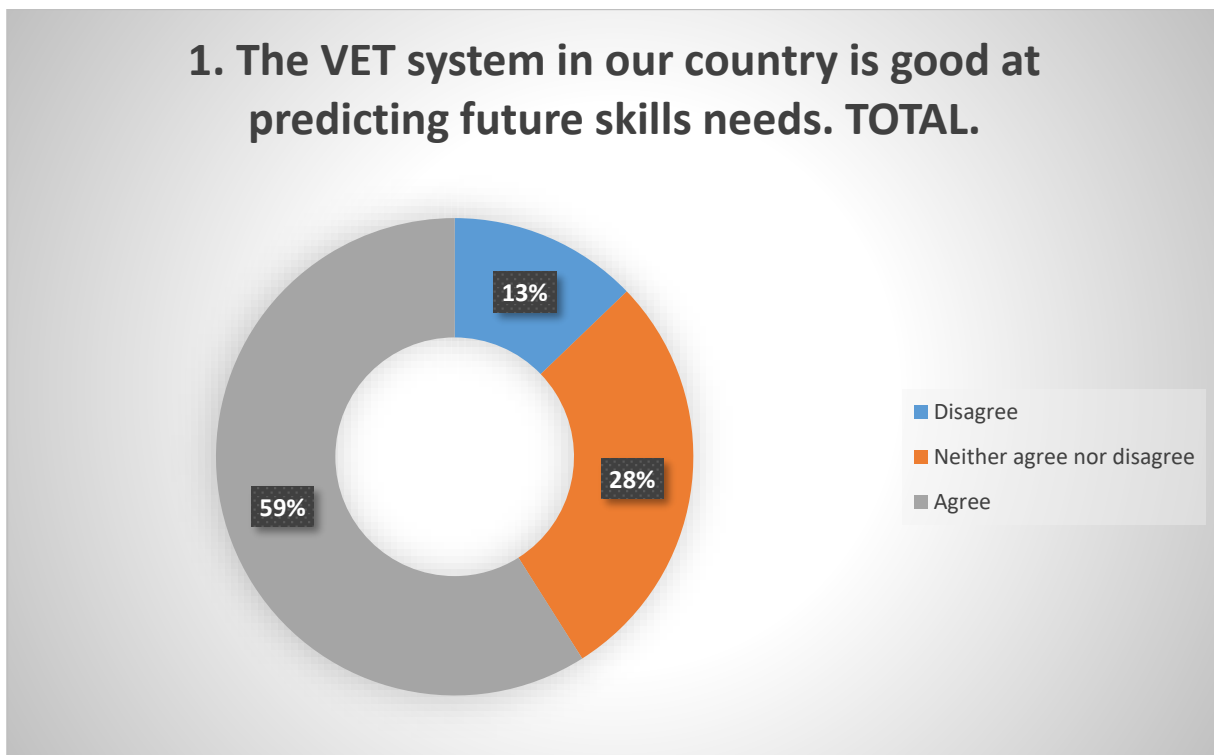
1. The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs. TOTAL.

13% — Disagree
28% — Neither agree nor disagree
59% — Agree

13 % disagree and state that their VET system is not good at predicting future skills needs, where 59% find that their VET system is good at it. It is surprising to see that 28% neither agree nor disagree to this important and fundamental expectation from every VET system.

When we look at the different countries responses we see relatively big differences between the countries.

In Sweden does all the respondents find that their VET system are good at predicting future skills.

1. The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs. SWEDEN

100%

■ Agree

The respondents from Sweden have the following comments to and motivations for their answers:

- *Our planning for Higher VET programs, we rely on information obtained from:*
  - o *Regional network of companies within a given sector concerning skill needs*
  - o *Information from Chamber of commerce and sectorial associations*
  - o *Information from National Public Employment Agency, research group on future skill needs*
- *Our Advanced VET programs are based on the needs of regional labour market needs. There is a regional coordination which make prognosis on future labour market needs and VET programs are based on those prognoses*
- *We try very much to be responsive to the needs of employers because*
  - o *We have to justify for national that our suggested VET program is demanded by employer's skill needs*
  - o *For the future of our students to get employment*
- *I agree since I think we do a very properly and thoughtfully research before we start a VET programme. Amongst other things we conduct many interviews within the industry to make sure we get a good knowledge of what and where future skills well be needed.*

The Danish respondents all agree like the respondents from Sweden and have the following comments:

- *We are especially good to predict the future in the sectors where the enterprises are in front of the development*
- *Many stakeholders are involved in the process and have their voice and arguments included*
- *The system are very flexible in regards to adapting to changes*
- *The fact that the students are a part of their education in the enterprises make it easier to deliver what is needed*

This picture from Sweden and Denmark differ from the one in Greece, where only 50 % agrees and where 50 % neither agree nor disagree.
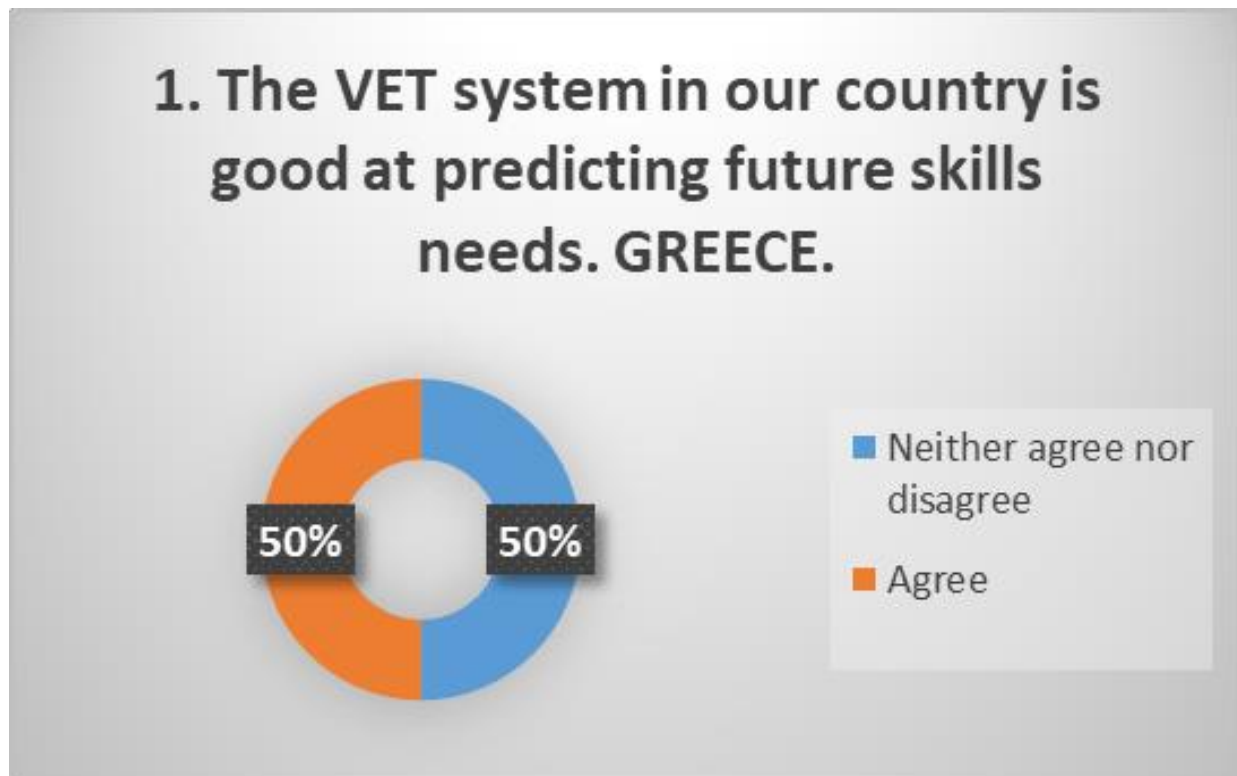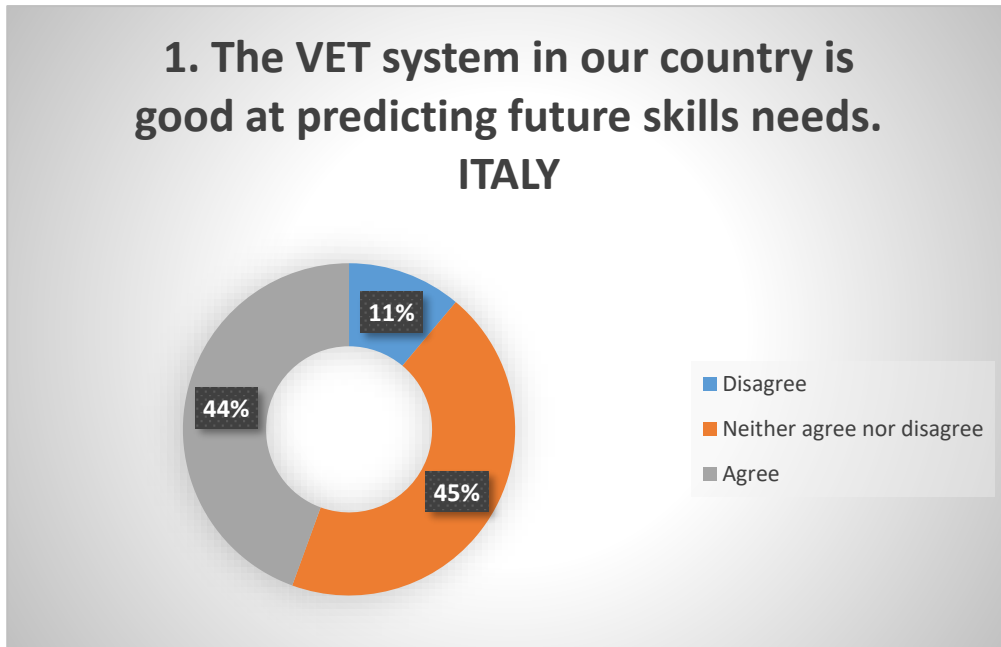

The respondents from Greece had a number of comments to and motivations for their answers:

- *It depends on the type of VET. In iVET, this does not exist as the VET programmes are defined by the Ministry of Education, while in the cVET, the things are better as it is related to current needs*
- *The VET system responds to identified needs.*
- *Just at trainers level. The majority of trainers are self-employed, i.e. Ecomonists, owners of financial offices, self-employed electrician etc.*
- *Cooperation with experienced trainers who know the needs of labour market*
- *Almost not in fixed specialties (e.g., electricians, plumbers). However, in some specialties which have increased demands the prediction of future needs are in high level.*
- *Not at all. Just the cVET which covers more modern needs.*
- *The VET curricula are maintained same without any important modifications over the last decade. However, trainers can include additional issues in the existing training material in order to follow the fast-changing world*
- *Yes, in certain specialties, e.g., in chef, make-up, but no in other ones, e.g., specialties related to child care, physiotherapy etc. It depends on which specialty is much in request.*
- *VET programmes implemented for many years without any significant changes by the Ministry of Education*
- *Complete curricula, which cover current needs*

Both Italy and Ireland give a more complex picture as shown below.

In Italy answer 11 % that they disagree where the figure is 40 % among the Irish respondents. On the other side does 44 % agree in Italy and roughly the same in Ireland with 40 %.

1. The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs.
ITALY

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree

45 % of the Italian respondents neither agree nor disagree on this important question, which may indicate, that they are not sure or they just want to be polite and not too critical to their own VET system.

The Italian respondents that agree in the statement mention the effects of the introduction of Work based Learning:

- *Increased communication between school and the world of work*
- *Teachers more familiar with productive systems and the world of work*
- *Students acquire more skills related to a professional education path since the use of advanced technologies at school is more limited for their costs*

One of the respondents interviewed by the Italian partner are from Spain and motivates answering "agree" in the statement with

- *Education and Labour authorities have different systems to monitor and evaluate VET program (Spain)*
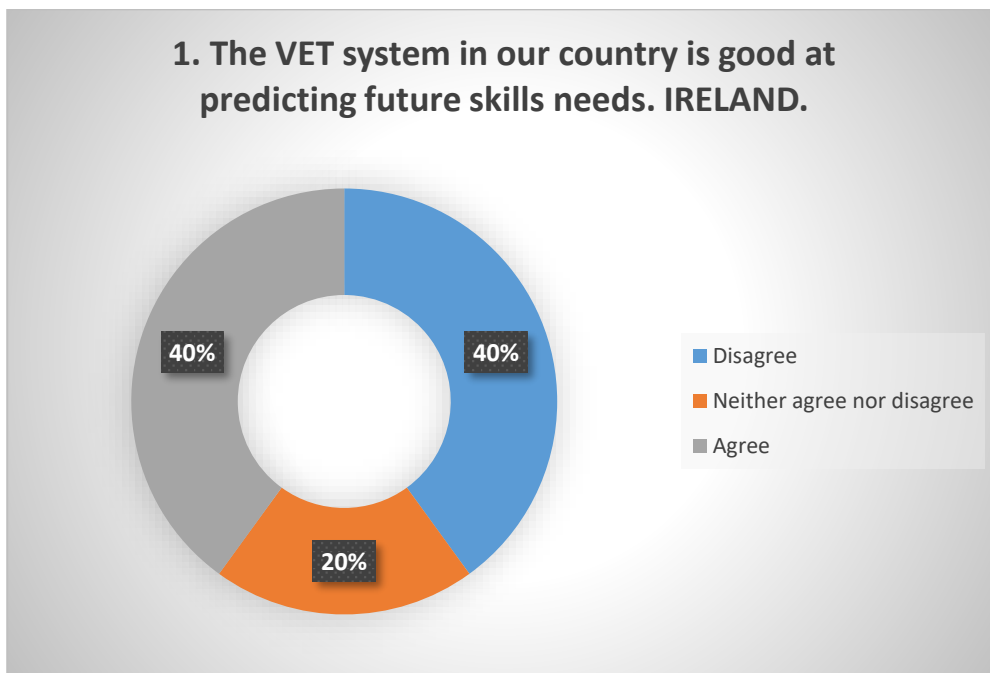
The Italian respondents that neither agree nor disagree, mention among other arguments the following:

- *Still a lot have to be done regarding digital and entrepreneurial skills*
- *Sometimes employers, in particular SME, notice a distance between what the economy ask in terms of skills and what schools do in terms of programs.*

None of the Italian national respondents disagree in the statement but two of the international interviewed VET providers disagree with the following motivations:

- *VET schools are not oriented in new technologies (Lithuania)*
- *Lack of VET schools, more young enrolled in Universities, increased demand for education of technical skills but difficulties since VET schools have been closed (Poland)*

The figure for neither agree nor disagree are in Ireland 20 %, as shown below.

1. The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs. IRELAND.

40%

40%

20%

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree

The 40 % of the Irish respondents that disagree in the statement motivate it by arguments like:

- *Ireland is very good in high level engagement. The engagement at the SME level is much poorer. There is a scope for better engagement between local enterprise groups and county councils which is currently very disappointing. Ideally, they should be working together*
- *It could be better - we have shortages e.g., in hospitality and construction sector now. There was an oversupply in the construction sector during the Celtic Tiger and now we have shortages. Ireland could fare better in this regard and learn from the past*
- *We are behind the curve in terms of predicting future skills needs. We know the global trends, we have some insights into what might be needed but the discourse is too broad, and these insights are not localized to support the VET system on the ground*
- *VET system in this country is not good at predicting future skills needs. By and large, providers are running the same programmes year after year and no emphasis is put on predicting future skills needs.*

The 40 % of the Irish respondents that agree in the statement motivate it by arguments like

- *It is not bad. As a VET provider, we engage with the industry on regular basis to seek in advance information what skills are needed before we go for approval and validation of the programme(s).*
- *In Ireland we have Future Skills Needs Group and it is their job to predict future skills needs skills shortages, so it is not really for VET system as there is no mechanism in place to do this kind of work at the VET level.*
- *Yes, Ireland is quite good at predicting future skills needs. The ESRI and government are involved in general predictions. The SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) closely monitors the labour market and conducts all necessary research. On the basis of the research findings SLMRU breaks down via sector the skills needed across the board to mitigate skills shortages. VET providers e.g. ETBs have targeted goals based on the SLMRU research findings and tied to SOLAS strategy.*

The 40 % of the Irish respondents that neither agree nor disagree in the statement motivate it by arguments like
- *We are quite good at predicting future skills needs but we are very slow on the ground. It takes time before the programme is set up, validated and ready to be run, so in this sense, things get delayed.*
- *To my knowledge most of the work around predicting future skills needs are done at the national level not the VET provider level and it is debatable how accurate these predictions are.*

4.2 Avoiding skills shortages

Avoiding skills shortages is a way to show how good countries are at predicting future skills and especially how good they are at (re)acting on their own predictions. Again here are we interested in the current situation in the different countries as the selected respondents see it. And again how is this possible to achieve, organize and measure?

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:

<mark>The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages.</mark>

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

The accumulated figures show almost the same picture as for how good the VET systems is at predicting future skills needs. 20 % disagree and 52 % either agree or strongly agree. Again here does 28 % neither agree nor disagree on a question most stakeholders would have expected them to be sure about their opinion and contribution.

2. The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages. TOTAL.
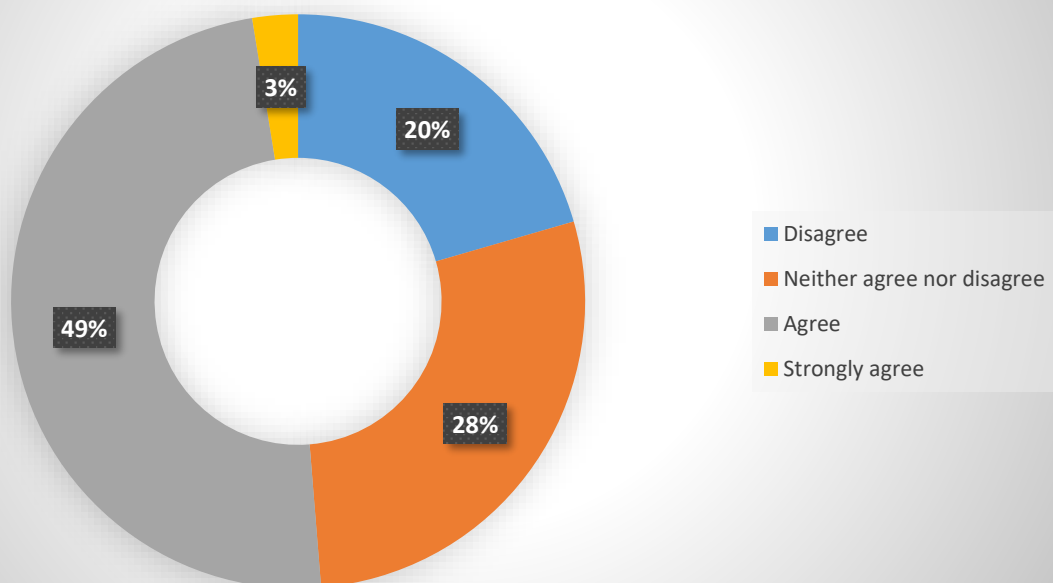
- 20% Disagree
- 28% Neither agree nor disagree
- 49% Agree
- 3% Strongly agree

The Swedish respondents agree 100 % in that their VET system is good at avoiding skills shortages, as presented below.

2. The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages. SWEDEN.

100%

Agree
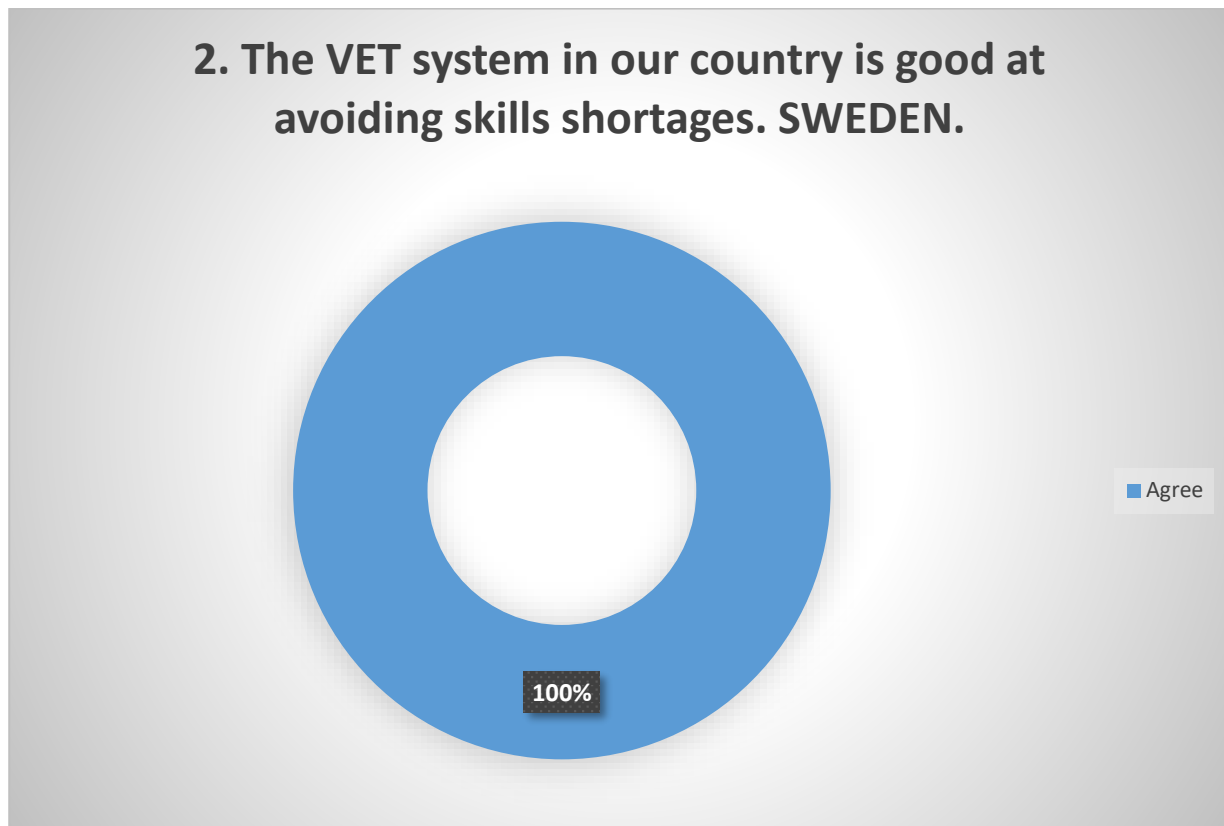
The Swedish respondents motivate their answer by:

- *For jobs at middle level skill yes especially technical jobs, those enterprises are more active in cooperation to express future skill needs to avoid skill shortage. We know that IVET is not that much flexible*
- *Yes, but there is a need to expand higher VET in more occupations in order to avoid skill shortages. National agency has its own statistics regarding future skill needs, in order to approve right applications*
- *Yes, there are several justifications for that*
    Statistics from national
    Statistics from national agency for higher VET
 Based on these statistics and dialogue with Employers national association, the national agency for higher VET make decision what VET program are needed to avoid skill shortages
- *Yes we think that this cooperation with employers give us good opportunity to avoid future skill shortages. However, it is not a guarantee since some programs, although addressing future skill shortages have not enough applicants like some technical programs*
- *It has been a development towards this issue. Today we have more experience in how to develop our relationship with employers in order to get information about future skill needs in order to develop right VET programs. However, it is a development that needs to continue and be further developed*

In Greece does 60 % agree and 40 % neither agree nor disagree, which indicates confidence in the VET system and especially in the VET providers' contribution to avoid skills shortages.

2. The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages. GREECE.

- 40%
- 60%

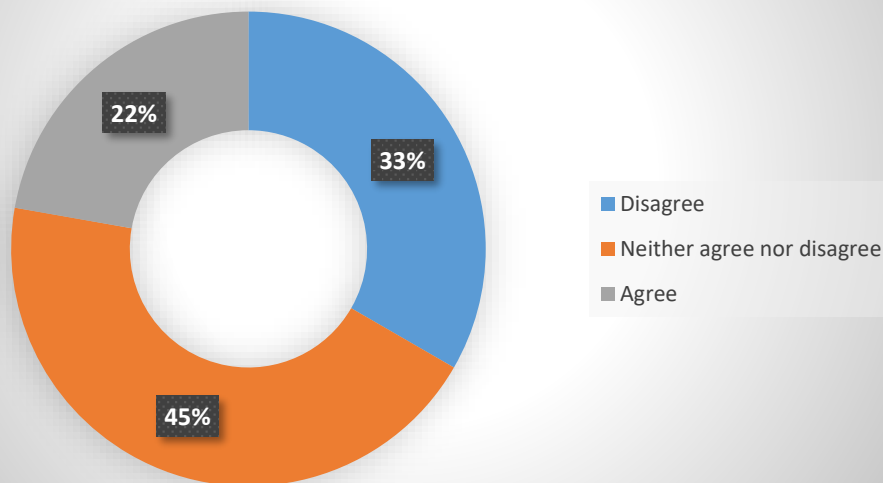■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Agree
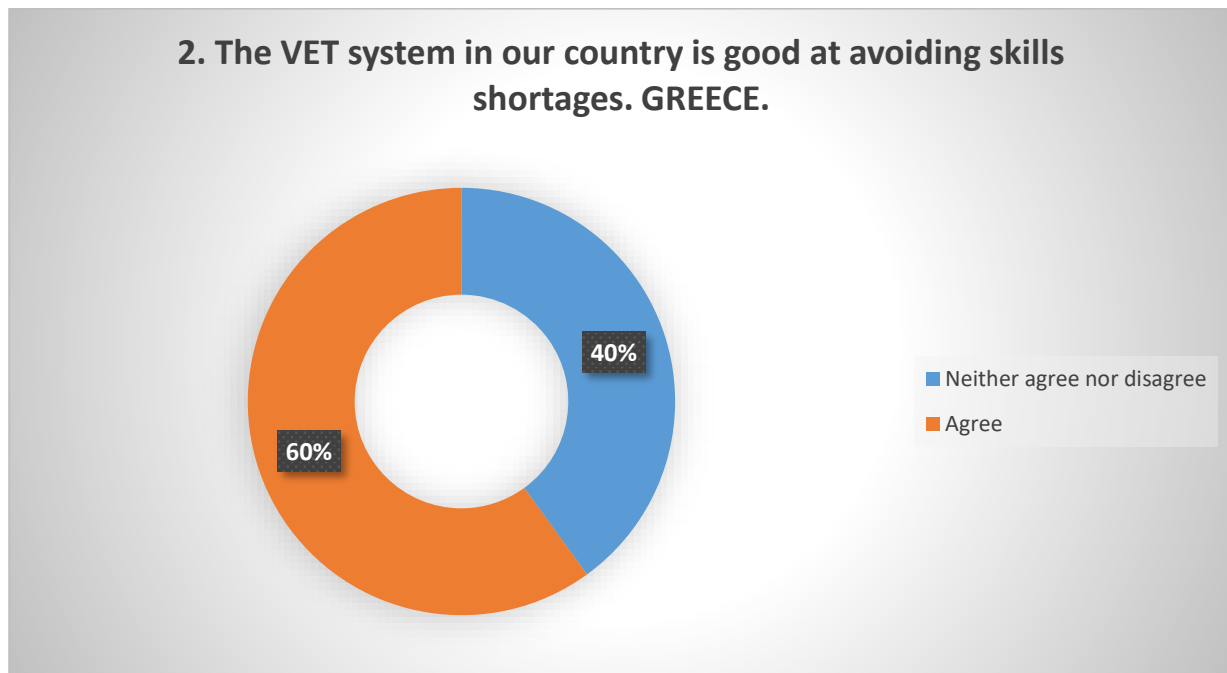
The comments from Greece are:

- *Almost completed VET curricula*
- *It is good due to extroversion of VET providers.*
- *They search new employers on their own.*
- *The curricula are developed either by the Ministry of Education (iVET) or Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) or other competent authorities as chambers (cVET)*
- *Adequate VET curricula but not complete ones*
- *The existing skills are partially covered and VET providers make an effort to cover the future needs.*
- *Increased need to ensure VET programmes quality using more standardised procedures in order to follow needs of the labour market*
- *Yes, many VET projects funded by European Commission are in progress and involve both staff and trainers, therefore a part of avoiding skills shortage is covered by them.*
- *The existing VET programmes are almost complete, therefore, the current needs are covered.*
- *There is cooperation among the Ministry of Education and Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) in order to avoid skills shortages*

In Italy and Ireland are the respondents using a broader range of the scale for answers, as can be seen below.

2. The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages. ITALY.

33 % of the Italian respondents disagree and 22 % agree in that their VET system is good at avoiding skills shortages. The biggest group of respondents are the 45 % that neither agree nor disagree.

The national Italian respondents that agree in this statement supplement their answer with the following motivation:

- *School schedules are generally updated according to the training needs*
- *Continuous training programs for companies should be activated by the government and the regions.*

The respondents that neither agree nor disagree consist of two national Italian and a VET provider from Spain. The argue for their answers by:

- *To avoid skills shortage: development of appropriate curricula and mobility of EU citizenship supports SMEs and VET system*
- *Lack of skilled labour reported by companies*
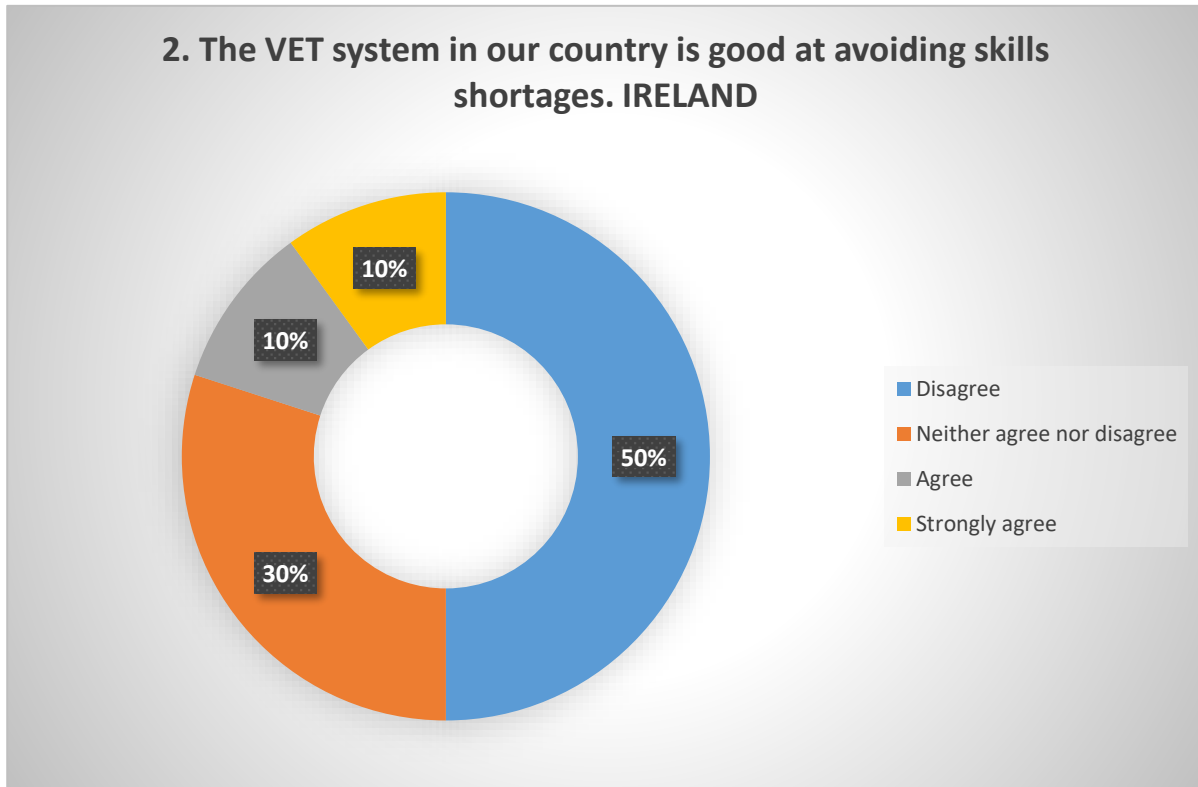- *Need to invest in monitoring and Quality Assurance mechanisms; Learner-centered approach (Spain)*

Finally mention the national Italian respondent that disagree in the statement:

- *Universities programs are still too theoretical*

And the two international respondents that disagree mention:

- *Polish authorities are still finding a more balanced approach to provide the skills that will be needed (Poland)*
- *Lack of qualified work force in industry sector (Lithuania)*

The Irish respondents show 20 % that agree or strongly agree.

2. The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages. IRELAND

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

50 % disagree and 30 % neither agree nor disagree, which indicates that many providers do not find their own contribution to avoiding skills shortages very high.

Among the 30 % of the Irish respondents that neither agree nor disagree were arguments like the following mentioned:

- *It really depends on the sector. In some areas we are very good in some areas we could fare better. For example, in healthcare, there are so many skills shortages and people are not trained quickly enough to meet the demand, it really depends on the sector.*
- *As I already mentioned, the entire process is slow. Despite data analytics and available information, the funding, bureaucracy and the validation process – it slows things down and affects how we deal with skills shortages. We are also constrained by the government policy that requires completion of intake of students by the end of September. So, if a learner decides that a course he/she sign up to is not really what he/she is interested in, it is impossible to start a new course until next September. Additional intake would change this scenario, but govern by the policy, we have to stick to one intake per year.*

The 20 % of the Irish respondents that agrees in different levels of the statement mention

- *I think that we react quickly enough and provide necessary skills to avoid long-term skills shortages. It is the reactive approach, but it is efficient despite that we have skills shortages in various sectors like for example ICT.*
- *I think that we react quickly enough and provide necessary skills to avoid long-term skills shortages. It is the reactive approach, but it is efficient despite that we have skills shortages in various sectors like for example ICT.*
- *Generally, we are good at predicting future skills and avoiding skills shortages. For example, the current broad provision based on apprenticeship model with the range of programmes leading to qualifications at different levels on the framework. So, we are getting there, but it is mostly reactive approach.*

One the other side argues the 50 % that disagree in the statement:

- *For such a small country, Ireland is not very good at predicting skills shortages. Despite monitoring Ireland's skills supply the information is not up to speed with the ever-changing economy and industry needs. In addition, Enterprise Ireland[1] are not being utilised for identifying skills gaps. The entire system is not fit for purpose. Solution: Reactive approach rather than proactive is needed.*
- *No, we are not good. The shortages in hospitality, high demand for restaurants chiefs, shortages in construction industry, in wet trades (brick layers etc.). It all shows that we are not there yet. There should be more focus on identifying where demand is going to be to ensure adequate supply.*
- *We have a lot of skills shortages in hospitality, ICT and other sectors to name just a few. We need people for highly skills roles and low skills roles. And even with the government supported initiatives like for example STEM[2] aimed at improving competitiveness in science and technology and bringing more women into STEM with a view of further workforce development, it is still reactive not proactive approach. Going future, it is essential that additional funds are spent on increased support for in-company training and programmes relevant to employers needs particularly SMEs to address growing skill gaps in the Irish economy.*
- *We have skills shortages in Ireland, so we are not very good at predicting and avoiding the skills shortages. Naturally the condition of the labour market, unemployment rates and immigration are additional factors, but whatever estimates we have, the fact is that we have skills shortages.*

The Danish respondents states that the VET is not good at avoiding skills shortages, mainly due to

- *We cannot force the students to select their education*

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[1] Enterprise Ireland is the Government agency in Ireland responsible for supporting Irish businesses in the manufacturing and internationally traded service sectors.

[2] STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. STEM education offers many career paths to graduates see https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/STEM-Education-in-the-Irish-School-System.pdf

- *The choices of the students, the prestige in the working areas and the alternatives the students face influence their choice of education*

Additionally to the statement presented above, was some of the respondents asked:

==How do you/how do VET providers get relevant and up to date information about the needs of employers?==

The respondents contributed with the following list of tools and instruments:

- *Professional evaluation (Italy)*
- *Strategic plan of the group (Italy)*
- *Active participation in working groups among the different VET providers and trade associations and companies (Italy)*
- *POLI FORMATIVI (Italy)*
- *Assessment, questionnaires, follow up (Italy)*
- *Interviews with stakeholders (e.g. directors) (Italy), (Poland)*
- *Consultancy with local training agencies (Italy)*
- *VET in Europe Country Reports (Spain)*
- *Responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science (Lithuania)*
- *Observation of staff on the job, need analysis and special programs (Poland)*
- *They involve the employers in teaching activities (Greece)*
- *Formal or informal meetings between VET institutes and employers (Greece)*
- *Questionnaires (Greece)*
- *National Agency monitor future skill needs (Sweden)*
- *At regional level there is a coordination. They define future regional development and based on that they make prognosis regarding skill needs and that information is passed to VET providers (Sweden)*
- *Providers of higher VET are motivated to build up their network among local/regional employers in order to get information about future skill needs. (Sweden)*
- *We have regular contact with employers in the sectors we have VET programs. We meet them in forums organized by chamber of commerce and also through our own network. They are also members of VET programs management board. (Sweden)*
- *Every programme has it's own "control group". The majority of the group is from the industry. This help us (the providers) to be on top of things regarding information about the needs of employers. (Sweden)*

As a follow-up on the answers give above was some of the respondents asked

==How are employers/companies involved in these areas?==

The respondents contributed with the following list of tools and instruments:

- *Focus groups (Italy)*
- *Formal/informal connection with VET schools, especially teachers (Italy), (Greece)*

- *Managers involvement in individual training projects designing (Italy)*
- *Professional evaluation of colleagues (Italy)*
- *Interviews with Chiefs (Italy)*
- *Questionnaires that provide information about future skills (Italy), (Greece)*
- *Direct involvement (Italy)*
- *Local agencies in contact with companies (frequent visits) (Italy)*
- *Discussion and comparison tables between professional association and schools (Italy)*
- *Constant dialogue with VET Institutions (Poland), (Lithuania)*
- *Participation in debates/conferences (Poland), (Lithuania)*
- *Ministry of Employment and Regions are the place where companies and employers are involved in adapting training offer to the labour market needs (Spain)*
- *Evaluation process and meetings (Greece)*
- *They highlight the skill needs in the labour market (Greece)*
- *Presentations, seminars, through the chambers (e.g., vocational training for employees of small and very small enterprises) (Greece)*
- *They cooperate with regional VET coordinators to express skill needs (Sweden)*
- *They are involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of VET programs (Sweden)*
- *They provide information about future skill needs, engage in development of curricula, participate in VET program management board, provide WBL sites (Sweden)*
- *We do regular questionnaire among employers and also use face-to-face method to get information from employers in our region (Sweden)*
- *Via enterprises, the stakeholders in the different educations (Denmark)*

I order to be even more specific the respondents were asked:

<mark>*Can you give an example of good practice in these areas?*</mark>

This resulted in a number of interesting examples of good practice all presented in the different national reports. In this aggregated report will only a few be mentioned in order to show the variety of examples of good practice:

- *"GALILEO" PROFESSIONALE TECHNICAL POLO – INFORMATICS and MECHANICS aims to align training skills to the companies' needs and to the labour market, with reference to the Industry 4.0 and the Program of reindustrialization of the Lazio Region. The POLO collaborates with several companies as well as with Emplyment Agencies.*
- *The guidelines of the POLO's activities will include a particular focus on the development of strategic actions in line with the needs of the companies of the sectors involved. They will be divided into:*
  - *Training and support for Job Placement*
  - *Support for the development of competitiveness of businesses (Italy)*

- *CESPIM organizes training paths based on companies' needs emerged during b2b meetings. Cespim applies for financial support for the training addressed to the employees of the companies involved in. (Italy)*
- *https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/ online service allowing employers to search for trainings matching their needs. Set up by the authorities responsible for EU grants for projects on a national level. VET providers present themselves and their portfolios here (Poland)*
- *Invitation to employers to participate in events organized (Greece)*
- *We use professionals/employees as trainers (Greece)*
- *Close collaboration with chambers and OAED (Greece)*
- *All VET programs are run by a management board consisting of employers. We regularly invite employers and their representatives to event we arrange at our school. We participate in all events that chamber of commerce organize. (Sweden)*
- *Companies have learned that it is in their interest to participate in cooperation with VET providers of two reasons: (1) They avoid future skill needs and (2) the VET students are a good pool for future recruitment (Sweden)*
- *We organize workshops together with a sample of employers from sectors we provide VET programs. Throughout the workshops we discuss their skill needs. It give us providers valuable input for development of curricula for new programs. (Sweden)*
- *That 9 out of 10 of the students gets job within the sector that they have been trained is a good proof that VET program was developed according to the needs of employers (Sweden)*
- *WBL and apprenticeships in the enterprises introduces often the students to the newest machinery and methods (Denmark)*
- *We shall accept that students will learn topics they will not use later - and that we cannot predict which topics are irrelevant in the future (Denmark)*

It is often interesting to have an overview of bad practice, so some respondents were asked

<mark>*Can you give an example of bad practice in these areas?*</mark>

This resulted only in a few examples:

- *Schools that do not provide a training aligned with the labour market (Italy)*
- *Whenever an employer asks for training just to fill in 1 or 2 days of education for his/her employees (Poland)*
- *The iVET curricula are maintained the same during the last 10 years or more (Greece)*
- *Implementation of VET programmes without any update (Greece)*
- *Sometimes employers make wrong estimation regarding future skill needs and then the VET program fails (Sweden)*
- *When employers, especially big ones require very specialized VET program. It narrows the possibility of students for future career mobility (Sweden)*

- *Don't rely only on questionnaire, it is good but has to be checked in Face-to-face meetings (Sweden)*
- *We shall not try to mach needs at a very detailed level (Denmark)*

4.3 VET dynamic?

Vocational education and training have often been criticized for living in its own world separated from the fast changing world of modern economies. We know it might provoke some of the respondents, but when even OECD mention it, we decided to raise this question in order to get the reactions from the respondents.

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:

Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

23 % of the total respondents disagree with the statement and 28 % neither agree nor disagree. It leaves almost half of the respondents (49 %) stating that they agree or strongly agree in that vocational provision develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and that this can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economics. In many ways a very self-critical point of view.
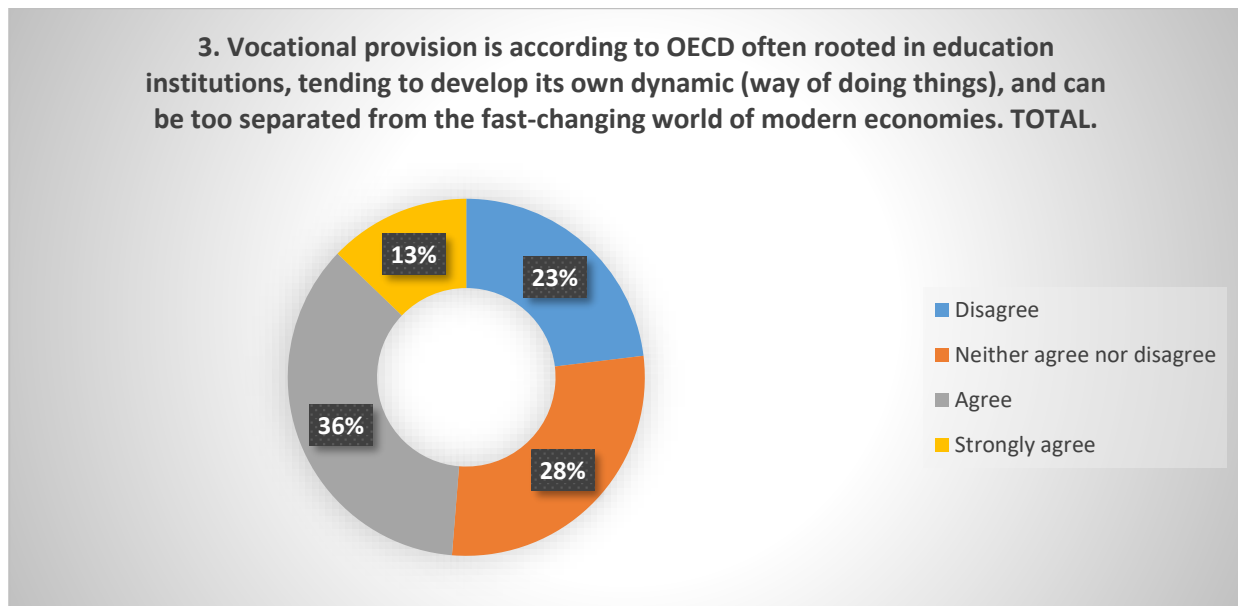

3. **Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies. TOTAL.**

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The respondents from Sweden are very clear in their answers. 50 % disagree and 50 % neither agree nor disagree as shown below.

3. Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies.
SWEDEN

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

50% / 50%
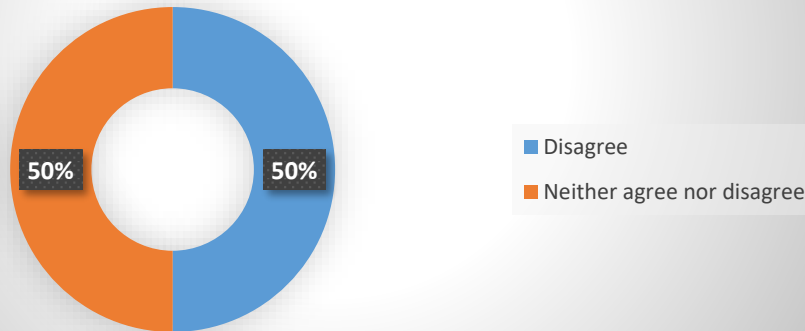
The respondents from Sweden that disagree in the statement made the following comments:

- *In Higher VET, we develop the curriculum together with employers, we are responsive to employers needs*
- *No, we think that our higher VET was created to meet this problem. When you start to develop new VET program based on employers need and also engage them in curricula development you solve this problem*
- *I don't agree because the higher VET is based on employers needs. It has to be initiated implemented and evaluated together with employers*
- *I do not agree since I think we're doing a very good job in researching what programmes will be put together, with future skills that are needed in today's society*

The respondents from Sweden that neither agree nor disagree in the statement made the following comments:

- *It can be true to some extend regarding I VET. However, the HVE is based on the skill needs in the labour market expressed by employer. One risk is that the communication between employers and VET school regarding learning outcomes does not work well.*
- *For some programs it is true especially IT related. The changes are too fast for educational institutions and it require almost symbols relationship between companies and educational institutions.*
 *In other VET programs it is different. It is easier to have regular dialogue for adapting the VET program to the needs of companies.*
  However, there is a need for development of new methods and tools for cooperation and dialogue between VET providers and enterprises.

- *This was the situation before in Sweden and still is regarding labour market training for unemployed and also IVET. However, in case of higher VET, providers have a tendency to listen to the needs of employer.*
- *It may be the case of higher education, but not higher VET. Of all applicants, 45 % have higher education but they could not find jobs, but after a higher VET program, most of them get jobs*

This picture from Sweden differs from what the results from both Italy, Ireland and Greece shows.

In Italy does 78 % agree or strongly agree in the statement, and only 11 % disagree and 11 % neither agree nor disagree. In principle a very critical judgment of the VET provision.
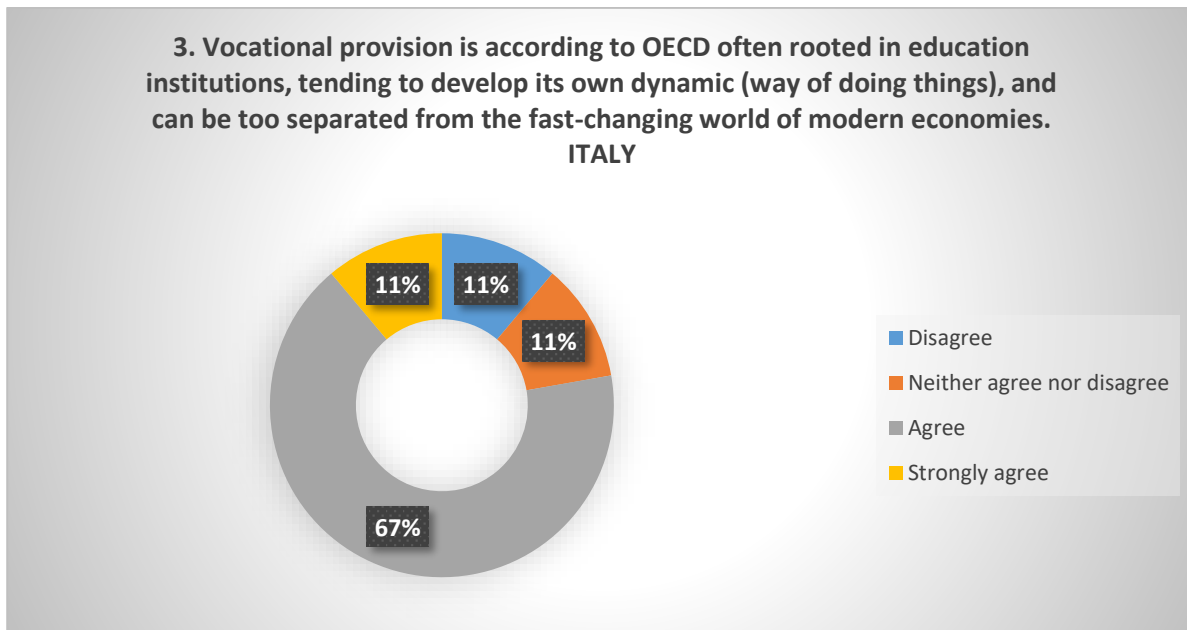
The Italian national respondents who agreed or strongly agreed in the statement supplemented their reply with:

- The dynamic of the VET system, in particular schools, is quite slow compared to the fast changing world
- The objectives of professional performance are reviewed and modified every year (not disconnected from the economic changes)
- Educational programs too abstract
- Sometimes yes, because the educational path is harmonized more with basic training than technical-professional training
- Education and school institutions sometimes far from the world of work

And the international respondents that agreed in the statement argue further:

- *School education is more focused on soft skills. Bureaucracy in large institutions, specially from the public sector, makes slower the response to the employers' needs (Poland)*

- *Relevant problem in Lithuania. The new reform of VET system determines that the external audit of each VET institution should be implemented every 5 years. (Lithuania)*

The national Italian respondents that neither agree nor disagree summarize the current situation and come with the following advice:

- *Education institutions need to be more involved in the economic field and to be more in contact with companies to better understand their needs.*

The results from Ireland (presented below) are supporting the critical view from Italy with 50% of the respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement, and only 30 % that disagree and 20 % that neither agree nor disagree.
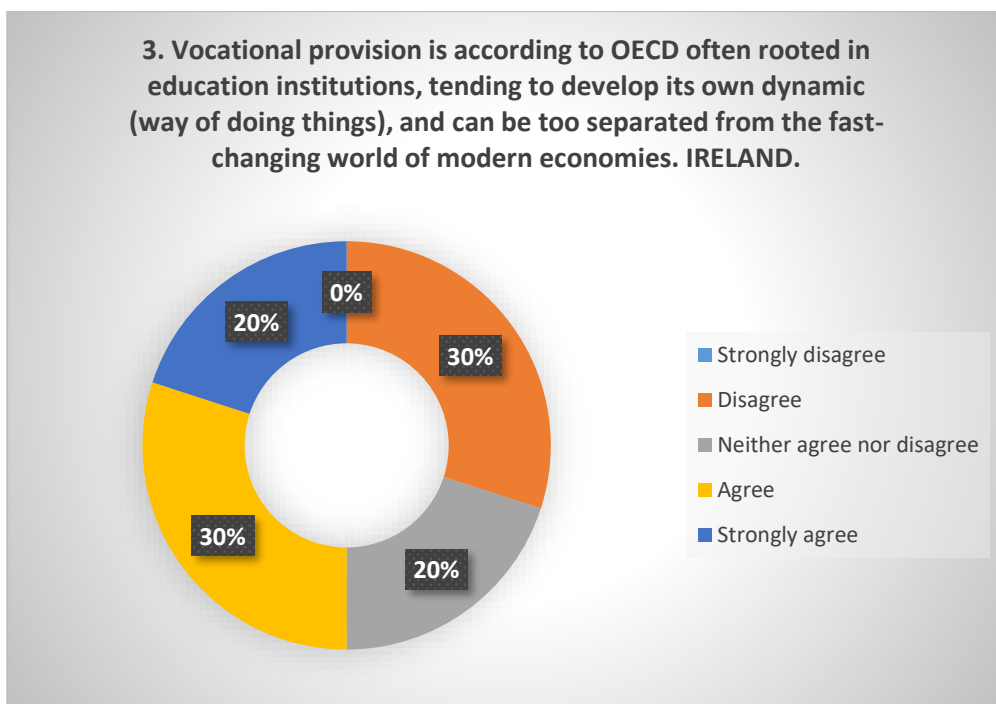
The 50 % of the Irish respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement use some of the following arguments:

- *By and large education and training programmes are 'divorced' from the reality of the labour market and often do not meet the employers' needs apart from the apprenticeship programmes e.g., in construction. It should be mandatory to have WBL for each VET programme to facilitate learners' preparedness for the job.*
- *The entire structure in place is not designed to respond quickly enough to the needs of the industry. Sometimes there are other problems. For example, specific skills set are required but there are no trainers with the necessary expertise to deliver such education and training programmes. There are also funding issues.*

- *Schools and colleges – they do their own thing. The entire structure lacks flexibility and are separated from the fast-changing needs of the industry. More flexibility, responsiveness, perhaps blended learning could improve the current situation.*

Among the 30 % that disagree we find arguments like:

- *Efforts are made to design VET programmes as relevant as possible to the needs of industry.*
- *I disagree because, we work really hard to make sure that our programmes are relevant. We meet with employers regularly, we attend their events to learn what skills are currently needed, we also relay on data analytics and invite employers to us.*
- *Contrary to some other providers VET providers have some flexibility to deliver programmes designed as per the industry requirements. Every two months the Programme Board makes decisions in this regard. Naturally, there are some legacy structures in place and things can get slowed down but generally, efforts are made to ensure that provision is highly relevant to the labour market needs.*

Finally argues the 20 % that neither agree nor disagree:

- *It depends. On one hand, the needs of the industry and some sectors in particular change so quickly that it is almost impossible to keep a pace, so yes, they can be too disjoint. On the other hand, if we take into account course content, and I mean courses that focus on soft skills etc., then the answer is 'disagree' because they will always be relevant.*
- *It can be true for some VET providers that run their own programmes often disjoint from what currently employers need. However, there are many employers' need conscious VET providers that run programmes specifically designed to meet employers' needs. So, it depends on the type of VET provider.*

Finally show the results from Greece that 70 % of the respondents agree or strongly agree in the critical statement and that the final 30 % neither agree nor disagree. Again a very critical view of the vocational provision and its ability to follow-up with the fast-changing modern economies.

3. Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies. GREECE.

- 30%
- 20%
- 50%

■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Agree
■ Strongly agree

The Greek comments received were:

- *It refers to public VET providers*
- *Planning becomes from central authority (Ministry of Education), so this is common responsibility of both VET providers and the competent authority*
- *This statement seems to match better to public VET providers' policies. The private VET providers are more close to fast changing world*
- *Partially correct! There is not extensive flexibility to change things as the curricula and learning outcomes are defined by the central authority*
- *It's true. Each VET provider has his/her own way to implement training curricula according to institute policies and culture*
- *The implementation of VET programs is referred to VET providers.*
- *The curricula are received by the Ministry but the implementation depends on institutes*
- *VET programs that are provided in similar way for many years. However, the potential changes/modifications are directly related to the VET institute*
- *The VET institutes follow the procedures suggested by Ministry. However, each institute has its own policies on how to implement the procedures*
- *There is extensive adherence in the Ministry demands*
- *Common responsibility of the Ministry of Education and VET providers*

The Danish respondents agree in the statement with the following comments:

- *This was the situation before and is still in many schools*
- *There are very big differences in practice and orientation between the schools*
- *There are differences in the logic, argumentation and perspectives among schools and enterprises*

4.4 Learner confidence

Education is a serious matter for the learners, and learners expect VET providers to deliver relevant education grounded in the needs of the labour market. Learners can also be seen as one group of clients for the VET providers – clients that expect to buy an updated and relevant education, grounded in the needs of the labour market.

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:
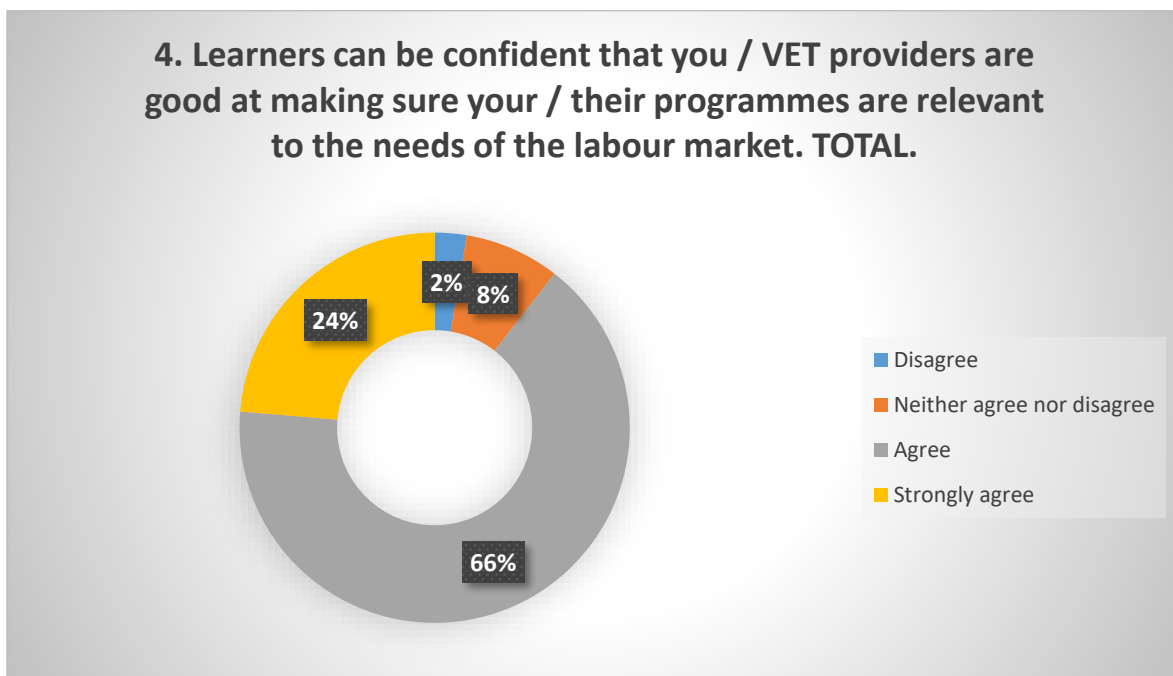
Learners can be confident that you/VET providers are good at making sure your/their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market.

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

Totally shows the results that 90 % of all the respondents agree or strongly agree in, that learners can be confident in the relevance of the delivered programs. Only 2 % disagree and 8 % neither agree nor disagree. This is a very positive reply and show that the responding VET providers have a very high trust in their own work.

4. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers are good at making sure your / their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market. TOTAL.

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The respondents from Sweden shows the highest degree of self-confidence with 80 % that agree and 20 % that strongly agree in the statement, as the figure below shows.

4. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers are good at making sure your / their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market. SWEDEN.

The respondents from Sweden have made the following comments:

- *The students do their WBL three times during their VET education. They get feedback regarding the needs for their skills in enterprises. This is the best way to prove to students that their VET program is needed.*
- *This is done by evaluation of students of their VET program after WBL period. The student evaluate their VET programs and provided competences with those they could use during WBL.*
- *Yes, our students get feedback during WBL period and also the management board (where student and employer run the training) can evaluate if VET programs reflect the need of employers.*
- *As far as possible we try to pinpoint the skill needs of employer when we develop our VET curricula but it must be stated that sometimes even employers within a sector are not of same view to define the skill needs. We try to have dialogue with employers when we define skills in curricula and also engage them in implementation of VET*
- *Yes, our learners are involved in all the structure we have concerning cooperation with employers.*

The respondents from Ireland show below almost the same high level of trust in their own programs relevance as the respondents from Sweden with 90 % answering agree and strongly agree. Only 10 % neither agree nor disagree in the statement.

4. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers are good at making sure your / their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market. IRELAND.

- 10% Neither agree nor disagree
- 50% Agree
- 40% Strongly agree
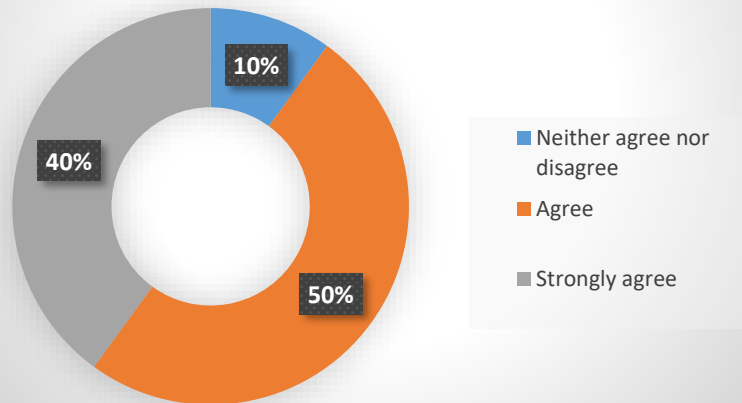
The majority of the Irish respondents with 90 % were answering agree and strongly agree in the statement and used the following arguments:

- *All our programmes have WBL. We engage with industry bodies, with chambers of commerce on regular basis. Experts from the industry are actively engaged from the very beginning - from the design stage of the programme. Every programme is regularly monitored and reviewed on annual basis to ensure that it meets the needs of the industry.*
- *Within our college we have necessary expertise and we also regularly meet with employers to ensure that our courses cover core competences sought by employers. Huge percentage of our students are interested in accessing HE, but we also have a good proportion of students who are into VET and it is our job to make sure that they have right skills when they finish their course.*
- *As VET provider we ensure that our programmes are relevant and that our students have opportunity for relevant work experience. We link with employers and pick up from them what skills they need. As a result of this engagement extra modules are often added to our programmes to enhance employability prospects of our students. We always aim to give our students the best possible experience. It is difficult to access, what level of practical experience is needed, therefore ongoing communication between employer and course tutor is so important. It is our job to make sure that there is a good fit between the employer and a student.*

The single Irish respondent who neither agree nor disagree in the statement argues:

- *Attempts are made to ensure that programmes currently offered are relevant to the labour market, but we are really only started to embrace this. Plans and structures have been put in place to have a dedicated Business Unit that will link and engage with employers, but it is the future.*
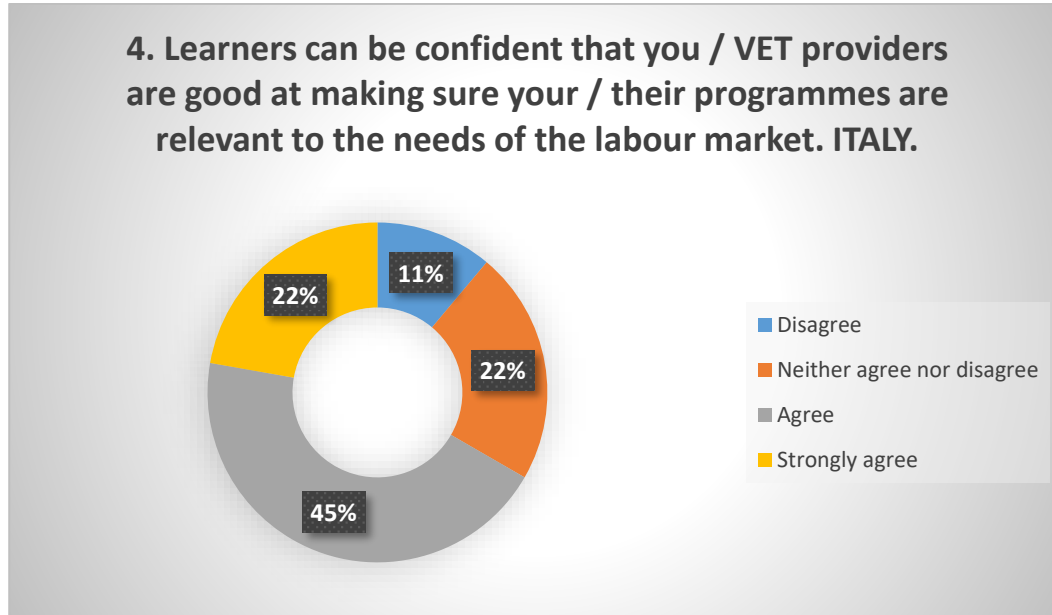
Greece follow exactly the same pattern as Ireland with 90 % answering agree and strongly agree. Only 10 % neither agree nor disagree in the statement.

4. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers are good at making sure your / their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market. GREECE.

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The Greek comments received were:

- *As VET providers, we "translate" the labour market needs to skills and competences. In this case the curricula are usually maintained the same for many years but the training materials are frequently updated.*
- *The basic level of knowledge, skills and competences are provided for all specialties, which can be improved either through apprenticeships or WBL*
- *The majority of programmes is according to the labour market needs.*
- *We, the trainers, keep our training materials up to date in order to be in line with labour market needs*
- *Participation of experienced trainers who are able to cover the labour market needs.*
- *VET institutes provide education as close as possible to the current needs of labour market despite the lack of resources*
- *Yes! This statement is implemented better in certain specialties*
- *Employers are involved in learning process, so the quality is assured*
- *Meetings with employers can solve new needs of the labour market*

The Italian respondents include 11 % that disagree and 22 % that neither agree nor disagree in the statement. But it still leaves 67 % to agree or strongly agree in the statement. Again a positive judgment of the VET providers' activities regarding programs relevant to the needs of the labour market.

4. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers are good at making sure your / their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market. ITALY.

- Disagree 11%
- Neither agree nor disagree 22%
- Agree 45%
- Strongly agree 22%

The Italian national and international respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement have the following comments:

- *Banca del Piemonte evaluates the requirements and references of the supplier (Italy)*
- *Training activity responds to the regulatory needs required by the banking system, the skills gap highlighted and the objectives of the company. (Italy)*
- *Trainers are always professionals with senior profile, with practical and direct experience of the world of work (Italy)*
- *CESPIM plans training paths based on companies' needs emerged during b2b meetings with companies' managers (Italy)*
- *VET is under employment Ministry jurisdiction and the regions. It is based on cooperation between labour authorities and social partners (employers and trade unions organizations) at national and regional level, mediation and collective sector negotiation at national level (Spain)*
- *PAIZ starts by analyzing clients' needs before providing a solution. The company provides diversified offer with licensed programs (Poland)*

The group of national Italian respondents that neither agree nor disagree have few remarks:

- *Not yet, because not all schools are aware of the WBL relevance*
- *The good connections with SMEs in terms of job opportunities and WBL programs can be a good indicator that VET schools are in line with the labour market needs*

The respondents from Denmark agree in the statement .

4.5 Authority requirements

The topics and issues the VET providers focus on can have many sources ranging from demands from the students, employers/companies, internal decisions to requirements from VET authorities. Many studies have shown, that VET providers give a special focus on the requirements from VET authorities and especially if the fulfillment of these requirements are closely linked to funding and license to deliver programs.

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:
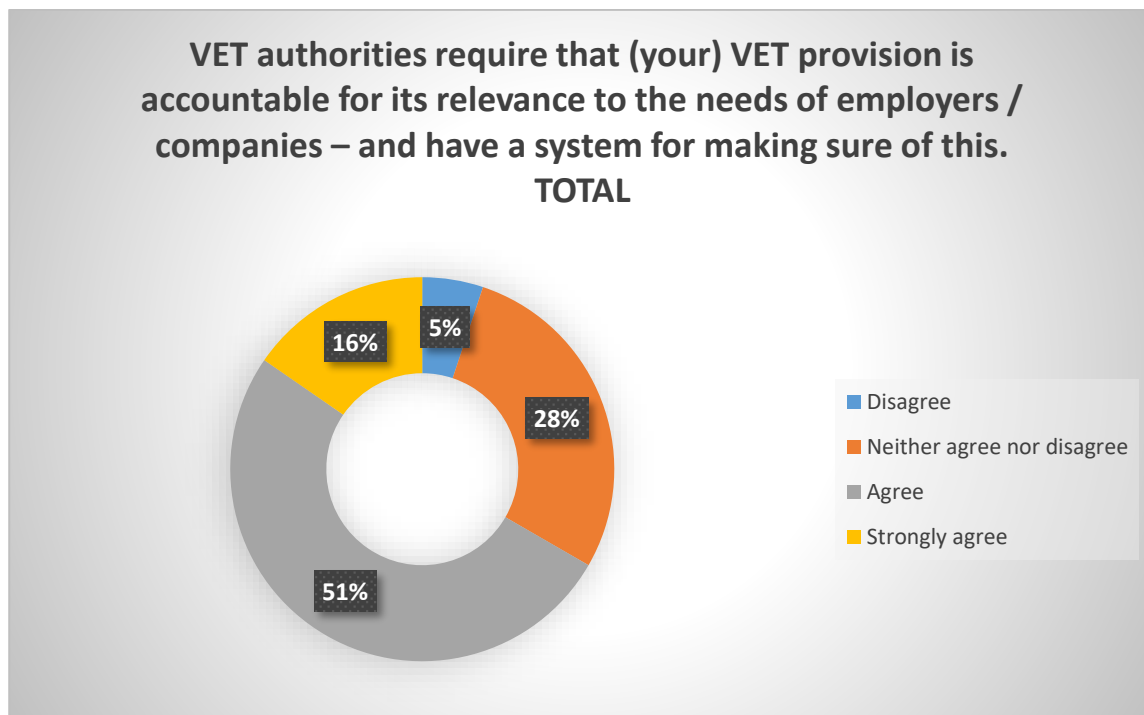
==*VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers/companies – and have a system for making sure of this.*==

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

Totally shows the results below that 67 % of the respondents agree or strongly agree in this statement. Only 5 % disagree and 28 % neither agree nor disagree. So the conclusion must be, that the requirements exists in most countries.

In Sweden answer the respondents very clear with 80 % agree and 20 % strongly agree, as presented below.

5. VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers / companies – and have a system for making sure of this. SWEDEN.

- Agree
- Strongly agree

20%
80%
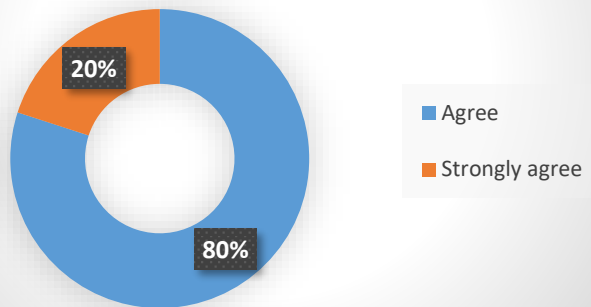
The respondents from Sweden motivate their clear answer by:

- *The authority (MYh), always check all the VET application submitted by providers with the reference enterprises mentioned in the application. Further they check it against statistics by public employment services. This motivate the providers to ensure relevance of their VET programs regarding skill needs*
- *Yes our National agency for higher VET has an absolute requirement that VET programs are based on real needs of labour market and they check this aspect before they approve a program.*
- *Yes, they first requirement is that the program you suggest is based on the needs of employers both present and future. They require proofs, so we have to check with employers all our programs. After application, the national agency contacts the employers to assure that the program is relevant for their needs*
- *Yes our national authority for higher VETY require that all our programs are based on labour market needs, locally or regionally. They have developed a system where they check the needs at national level but also contact employers at local and regional level to ensure that the suggested VET program is demanded by employers.*

In Greece does 70 % of the respondents agree in the statement but the final 30 % neither agree nor disagree. This make it a bit unclear what we can conclude regarding the strength of the VET authorities' requirements regarding a system for making VET provision accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers/companies in Greece.

5. VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers / companies – and have a system for making sure of this. GREECE.

30%

70%

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
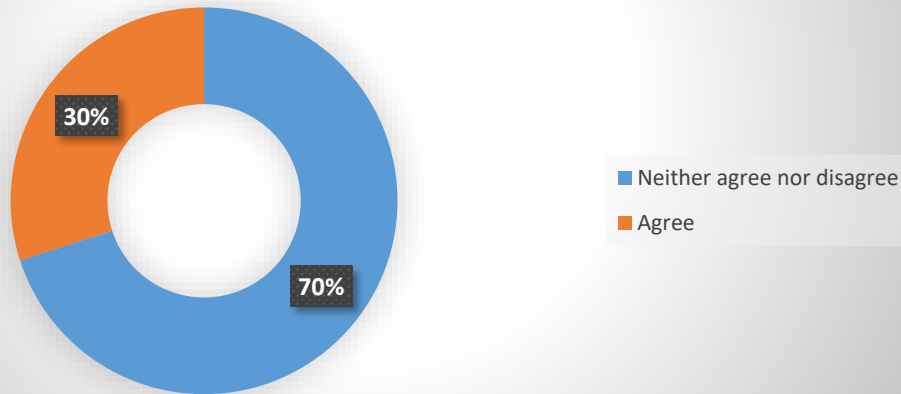
The Greek comments were:

- *Correct! The VET programmes are implemented to cover the needs of employers*
- *In theoretical basis, yes! But in practical basis the system is not fully implemented*
- *Yes, VET authorities require the VET provision to be relevant to the labour market needs, however no system exists that can ensure it*
- *Not enough updated programmed for many many years*
- *The Central Competent Authority monitors effectiveness of VET programs through certification exams. Therefore, yes there is a quality assurance system, however, it is not totally relevant to the needs of employers*
- *Monitoring and quality assurance of main axes of VET programs, mainly assurance of learning outcomes*
- *The Ministry of Education ensures the VET programs provision but not according to the needs of labour market and it's obvious that there is specific quality assurance system*
- *At the end of VET programs, learners have to pass specific exams in order to be certified. This process partially assures the quality of VET*
- *Provision of certified VET programs*
- *There are only internal quality assurance systems*

The answers from Italy are a bit more complex as seen below.

67 % of the Italian respondents agree and strongly agree in the statement, but on the other side are there 11 % that disagree and 22 % that neither agree nor disagree.
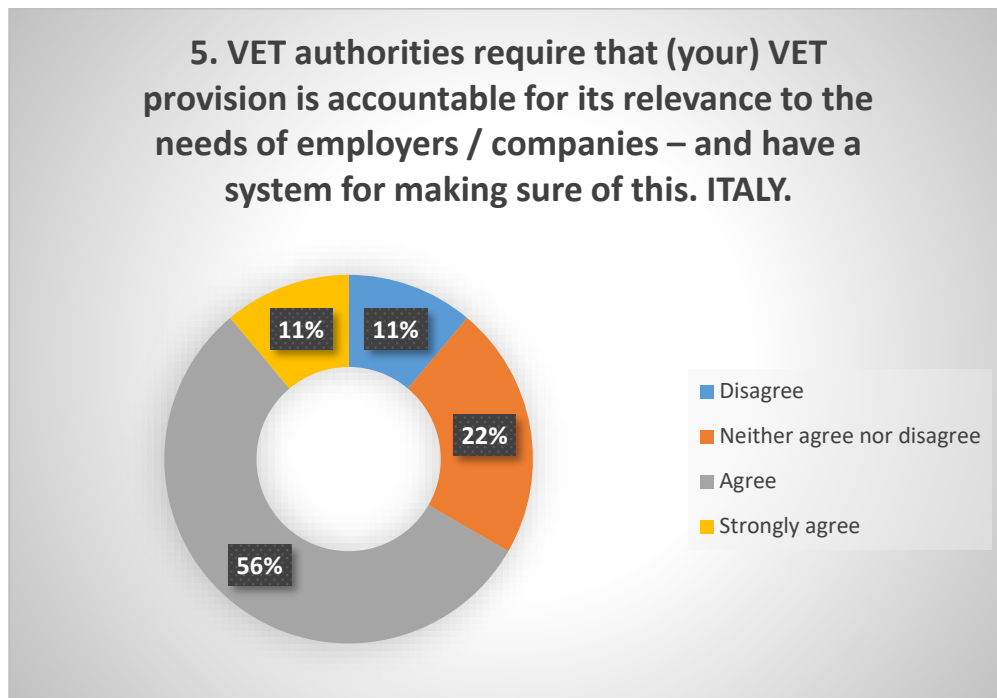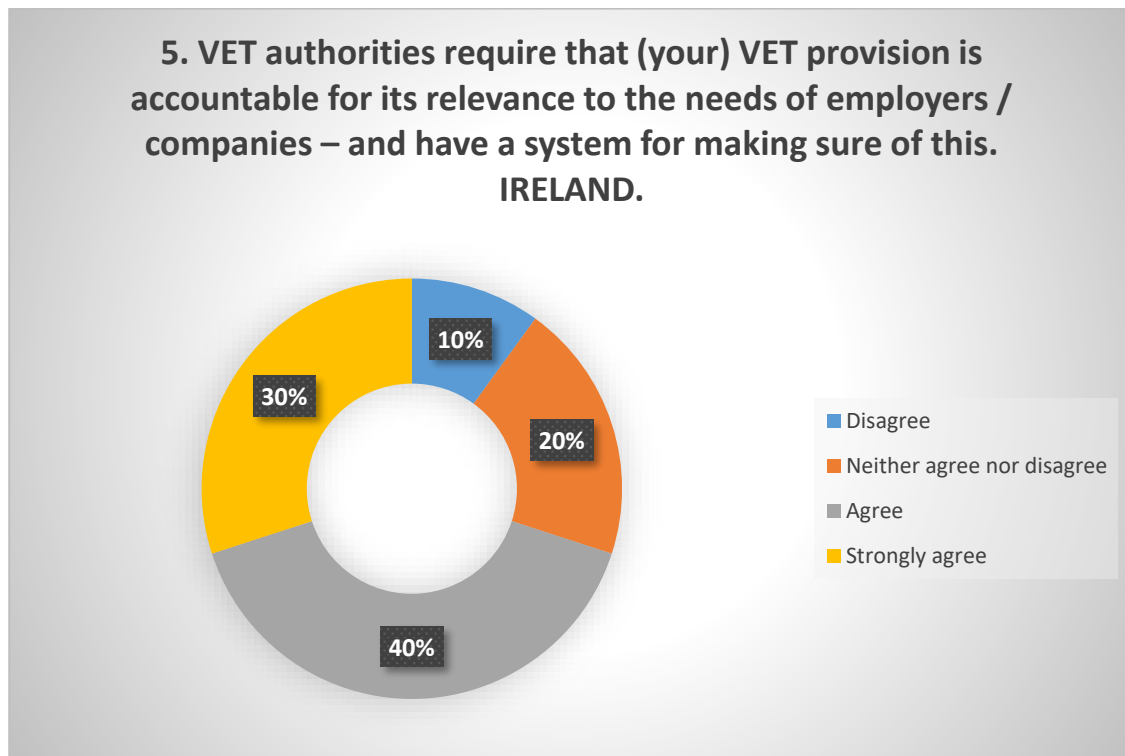

The national Italian and international respondents that agreed or strongly agreed in the statement made the following comments:

- *Regional and national accreditation system and Quality Assurance procedures (Italy)*
- *Training provided according to the employers needs (Italy)*
- *Use of end of course questionnaires (both learning and approval)*
- *Through the evaluation and certification of skills (Italy)*
- *CESPIM is engaged in responding to the actual companies' needs as it is its mission (Italy)*
- *Implementing a reform to solve the issue of VET institution relevance to the needs of business. The constant accountability will help to monitor it (Lithuania)*
- *VET curricula for public authorities are authored regionally. VET provision must comply with curricula for proper certification (Spain)*

The one international respondent that disagreed in the statement added this very interesting comment:

- *The Labour Office under the Lublin Voivodship Office requires to annually renew entry in the Register of Training Institutions, but the relevance of trainings to labour market needs is not a condition being accepted. (Poland)*

The responses from Ireland follow almost the same pattern as in Italy with 70 % that agree and strongly agree and only 10 % that disagree. Again here 20 % that neither agree nor disagree.

5. VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers / companies – and have a system for making sure of this. IRELAND.

The 70 % of the Irish respondents that agree and strongly agree motivate their answer with:

- *Every programme offered by us must pass an initial validation process and satisfy QA requirements of the awarding body. We also have to demonstrate that we engage with industry and the programme is relevant and fit for purpose.*

- *Accountability is imbedded in the entire validation and accreditation process. We have a robust system in place, and we have to be able to demonstrate that we are accountable. Hence, we have QA manual etc. and we also have to demonstrate that our programmes equip learners with the key skills.*

- *Yes, we are accountable and within our college we even have the Engagement Employer Officer who is in regular contact with local employers. We also organise Business Breakfasts. On the day, employers are invited to our college, we have a keynote speaker and there are plenty of opportunities for networking. Some employers offer bursary or grant but most importantly, work placement where our students can learn all practical skills required on the job.*

- *Yes, we are accountable. All our courses are closely related to employers' needs. For example, for courses in the healthcare sector, we deliver specific modules (minor awards) that are absolutely necessary and meet all the HSE3 requirements. These modules are*

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[3] The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for the provision of health and personal social services in Ireland
https://www.hse.ie/eng/

design precisely as per industry requirements to ensure 100% employability of our graduates in this sector. We also reviewed our assessment practices and we have company-based assessment in place now.

- *As a public VET provider, we have to be accountable. We provide regular monthly updates and adhere to all QA procedures and processes. We also regularly supply specific data on our learners inter alia on their entry level, their progression, learning achievements, outcomes, impact and employability. This data is collected on national basis.*

The Irish respondents that disagree do it with the following argumentation:

- *I am not aware of any system apart from QA evaluations and analysis*

The respondents from Denmark states: Yes, there exists a comprehensive system of demands and requirements from the Ministry of Education, and they have the following comments:

- *The Ministry of Education has a comprehensive toolbox in order to regulate, control and develop the schools*
- *many reports on quality and accountability are delivered by the VET providers*

4.6 Teaching and training

Teaching and training can be targeted, organized and implemented in many different ways. Our next statement focus both on the different ways of teaching and especially on how the teaching and organization of training promote and strengthen the key skills and core competences that employers need.

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:
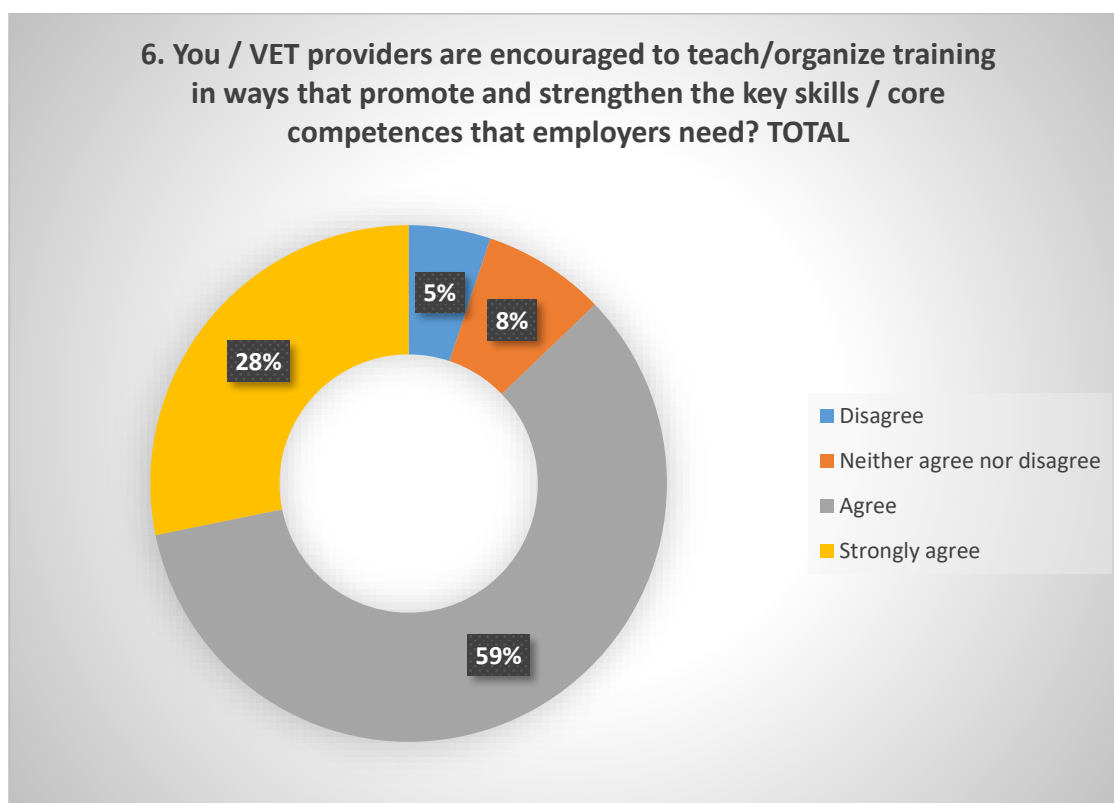
You/VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills/core competences that employers need?

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

Totally shows the results below that 87 % agree and strongly agree in the statement, and only 5 % disagree and 8 % neither agree nor disagree.

6. You / VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills / core competences that employers need? TOTAL

- Disagree — 5%
- Neither agree nor disagree — 8%
- Agree — 59%
- Strongly agree — 28%

The results from Sweden below show 90 % that agree and 10% strongly agree.

6. You / VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills / core competences that employers need? SWEDEN

The respondents from Sweden that agree and strongly agree have the following comments:

- *Most of feedback from employers are received after WBL period. They evaluate the competences the student received by VET program, So the answer is WBL student evaluation by employers.*
- *The structure of VET program management board ensures that. They are the highest authority for each VET program.*
- *The management board does continuous evaluation, if they are satisfied, they can contact the agency and the provider will be submitted to inspection*

The Italian and Irish responses are split into two groups. Italy with 89 % that agree and strongly agree in the statement and 11 % that disagree.

6. You / VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills / core competences that employers need? ITALY.
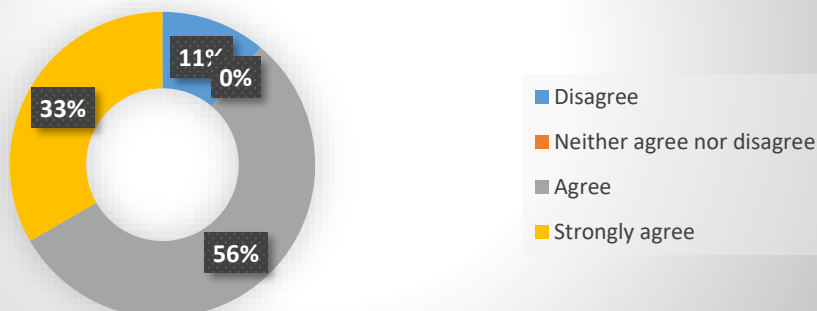
The national Italian and international respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement came with several interesting comments:

- *Research for innovative and practical methods (e.g. role-playing, e-learning) (Italy)*
- *Training and strengthening skills are relevant goals in UBI Academy. They increase professionalism of colleges and customer satisfaction (Italy)*
- *Measurable impact of the training through the development of skills (Italy)*
- *There should be a systematic process of organizing training in a way that VET schools and students have the proper skills to match the employers' needs (Italy)*
- *It's one of the CESPIM's objectives (Italy)*
- *Direct involvement and comparison with companies (Italy)*
- *VET providers support learners looking for suitable procedures and techniques, ensuring that the latter match their interests and capabilities (Spain)*
- *On a free market employers are likely to come back to the company that provides them effective trainings of the skills their staff needs (Poland)*

And Ireland below have as in Italy the answers split with 90 % that agree and strongly agree in the statement and 10 % that disagree.
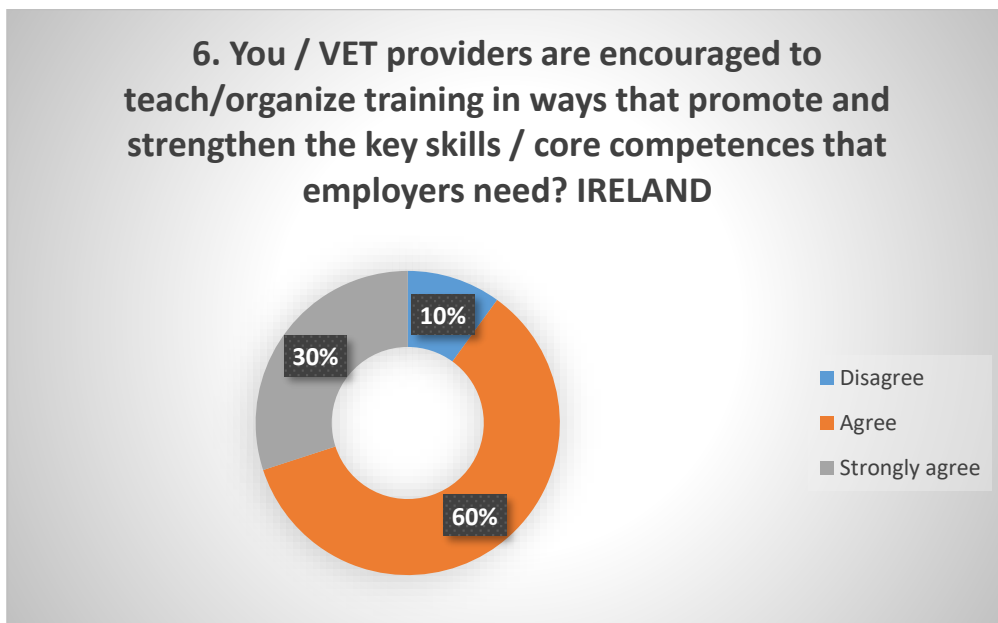

6. You / VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills / core competences that employers need? IRELAND

- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The 90 % of the Irish respondents that agree and strongly agree in the statement motivates it with:

- *However, it differs in practice across the sector.*
  All our programmes are delivered by experienced people from the industry and academics to ensure that learners will be equipped with key skills and core competences which is reflected in the employment rates.

- *All our programmes are based on the LOs approach. Upon completion of our programme learners can demonstrate what they know, understand and are able to do. We also have subject matter experts with minimum 5 -year experience, so it is not only their qualification(s) that matter. Depending on the sector we will link with employers and subject matter experts to ensure the relevance of our programmes.*

- *Within our college we have subject matter experts we also have the Further Education Support Centre for staff. We also meet employers and attend various events organised by them. Apart from regular programmes, we offer communication modules, CV writing, interview preparations etc. Our students have opportunity to attend a mock interview with the relevant employer and obtain valuable feedback. Soft skills matter and we want to be sure that our graduates have necessary skills.*

- *Yes, we are engaged in effective delivery and training. For example, we currently run a programme specifically design for Lidl Ireland. It is (NFQ) Level 7 programme for store managers. Apart from academic content, we also have people from the industry – guest speakers to cover certain subjects to ensure effective training. So, the course is very practical and grounded in the real world, not just academic theory.*

- *We have restructured and remodeled our education and training programmes to suit employers' needs. Our programmes are bespoke programmes run on modular basis offering flexibility in terms of delivery and provision to suit employers' needs. For example, bigger company have no problem with releasing 10% of their workforce for upskilling. SMEs and really small private organisations employing a few people are not in a position to do it. Therefore, we offer bespoke programmes with modules equipping learners with core skills and competences, run and delivered in a flexible way: 1 day per week, 1 day per month, in the evening, some modules are online or in the form of blended learning. Modularization allows employers pick up only the modules that are of their interest, so they do not have to commit to full programme(s).*

The one of the Irish respondents who disagree in the statement argues:

- *As I mentioned before, the programmes are geared toward general academic education not around key skills and core competences required by employers.*

Finally are the 100 % support to the statement in Greece with 60 % that agree and 40 % that strongly agree in the statement.

6. You / VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills / core competences that employers need? GREECE

40%
60%

Agree
Strongly agree
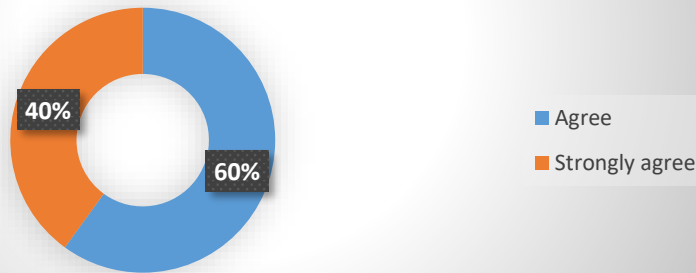
The Greek comments were:

- *This is the main priority of VET providers*
- *Yes, mainly the digital competences and entrepreneurial ones through certain VET programmes (e.g., vocational training for employees of small and very small enterprises, vocational training for NEETs) for retail and digital service, which lead to certification of competences*
- *Modern learning techniques and tools are used, which have a high level impact on learners' skills*
- *The soft skills are also enhanced through the implementation of training curricula*
- *Of course. They try harmonizing the techniques according to feedback that they receive.*
- *This is very important for matching process (matching of skills with workplaces), therefore, yes, they are encouraged*
- *Development/Enhancement of digital and social competences is part of the VET programmes. Moreover, some other skills such as active listening, resource management could be enhanced depending on the specialty.*
- *As much as possible. During the last few years new teaching techniques and tools have been introduced in the institutes which have support the strengthen of key skills and core competences*
- *Active learners during the VET course lifetime in order to gain further knowledge and skills*

4.7 Employers involvement

Employers are a key stakeholder in all types of vocational education and training, and are generally involved in a number of activities within vocational education. But how is this work structured, what are the employers involved in and how are they involved?

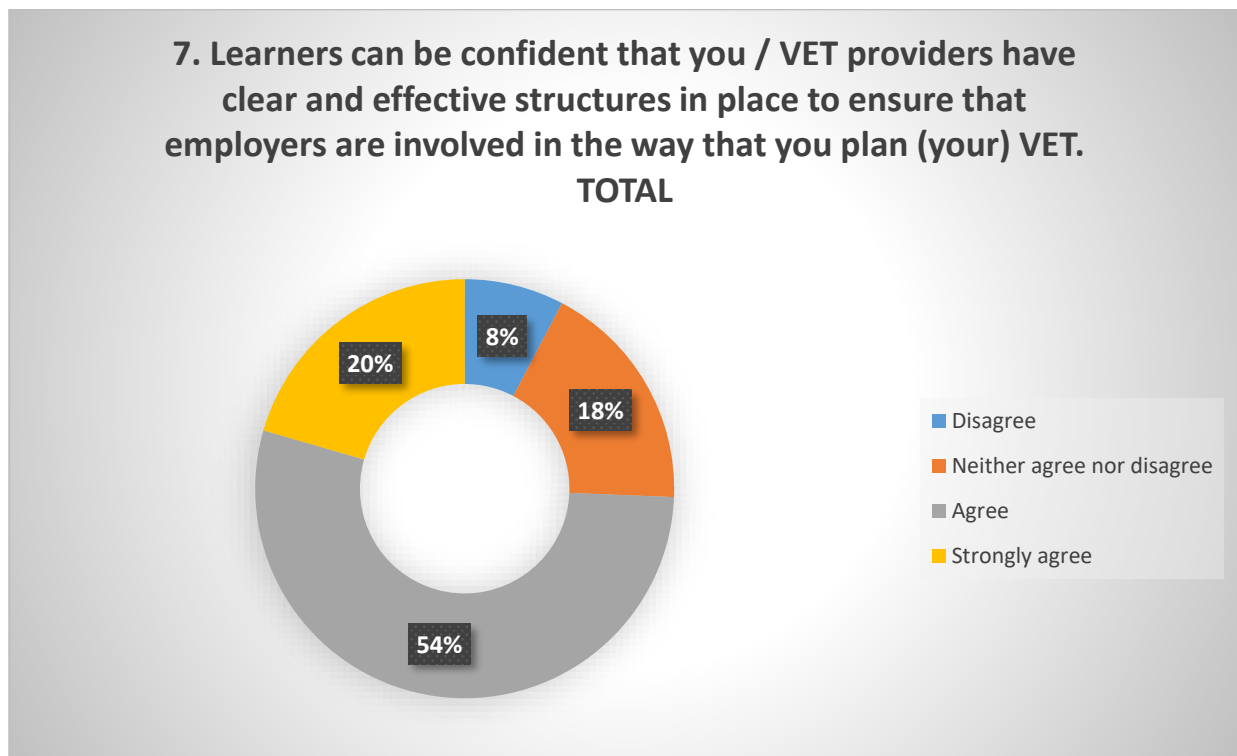We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:

Learners can be confident that you/VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET.

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

Totally shows the results below that 74 % agree and strongly agree in the statement and only 8 % disagree and 18 % neither agree nor disagree.

7. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET. TOTAL

- 8% Disagree
- 18% Neither agree nor disagree
- 54% Agree
- 20% Strongly agree

All the respondents from Sweden support this statement as the figure below shows; 90 % answers that they agree and 10 % that they strongly agree. These answers differ from the answers collected from both Ireland, Italy and Greece as the following figures will show.

7. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET. SWEDEN.
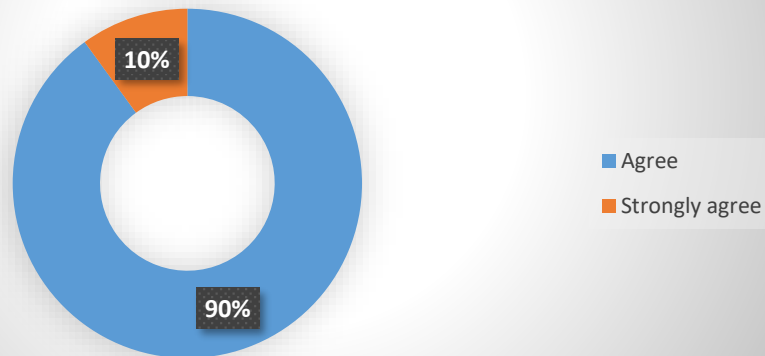

The positive Swedish answers are followed by these comments:

- *We involve our students in all activities in relation to employers so they see that there is a need for their training. They also participate in the management board of the training together with employers.*
- *Yes, that is achieved through management board of the VET program. It consist of employers, student representatives and teachers. The employers follow up and monitor the VET education. Their feedback is disseminated among students.*
- *This can be easily measured by feedback of tutors during the period of WBL. If the curricula is developed in cooperation with employers and the participate in the management of the training program, then it show the student that employers are supporting the program*
- *Through management board the student can see that we have good structure for continuous involvement of teachers*
- *Within in the framework of Higher VET, the answer is yes. The following structure ensures it:*
  - *VET program is developed in dialogue with employers*
  - *They participate in the management board of the program*
  - *They provide WBL site to VET students*

The Italian answers are using most of the scale we offered the respondents. 67 % answer agree or strongly agree in the statement, 11 % disagree and a relatively large group of 22 % states that they neither agree nor disagree in that VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that they plan VET.

7. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET. ITALY
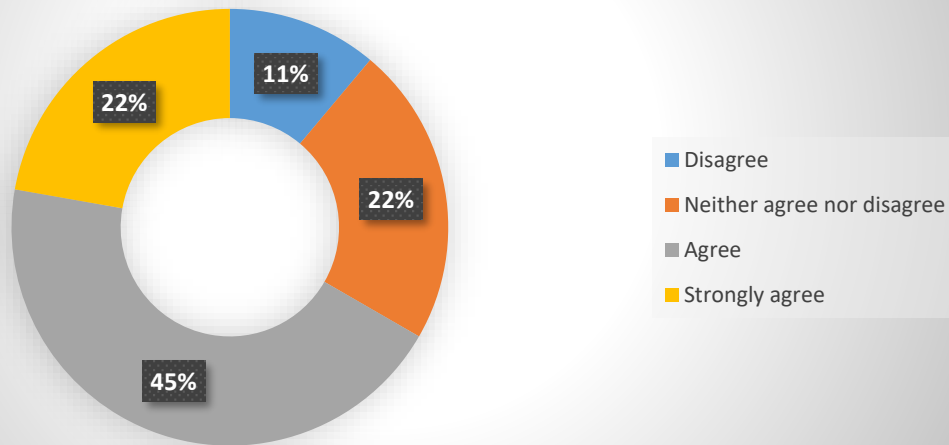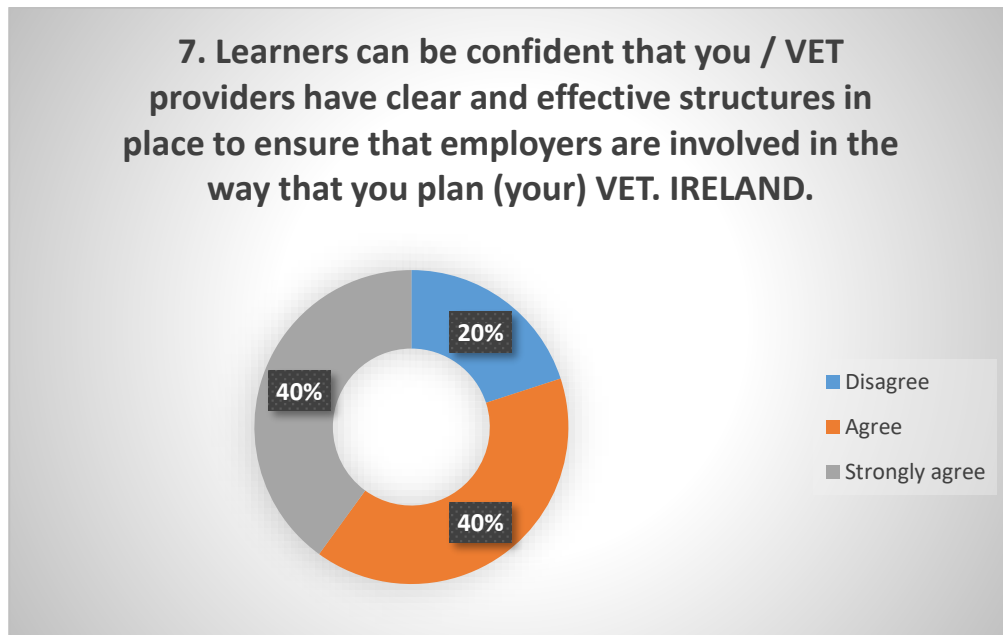

The national Italian and the international respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement have the following comments:

- *Employer and training provider are a single figure in UBI Academy (Italy)*
- *Not a particular information to learners in this way, but it can be declared that learners can be confident that PAIZ have a clear and effective structure in place to ensure the involvement of employers in the way it plans its VET (Poland)*
- *Representative bodies and VET providers should manage apprentices for learners and be set up in every country in Europe, according to the structure that would work best in the given political and social context. Public authorities and employers should encourage and support the establishment of representative bodies for apprentices (Spain)*

The national Italian and the international respondents that disagree in the statement have the following comments:

- *NO, especially in central and southern Italy because the systems do not provide direct and continuous influence on the world of work with the school (Italy)*
- *Effective and constant communication between business and VET institutions is not implemented (Lithuania)*

The answers from Ireland and Greece below show almost similar patterns regarding the number of respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement. In Ireland are there 60 % that agree or strongly agree and in Greece are the number in total 50 %.

7. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET. IRELAND.

20 % of the Irish respondents disagree in that VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that they plan VET. They motivate their answers by

- *I disagree because across the board a lot of VET providers run their programmes without any employers' involvement. New programme validation requires employers' engagement, so hopefully going forward things will prove.*
- *We understand the importance of employers' involvement and we try to get better. The new validation requires employers' engagement, so things will get better.*

The majority of the Irish respondents support the statement and have the following comments:
- *We engaged with experts from the industry at the design stage of the programme. Moreover, all our programmes are regularly reviewed on annual basis to ensure that each programme is relevant to the needs of the industry.*
- *Essential skills profiles with employers are needed at the design stage of the course and later to ensure that every module meets the needs of the fast pacing economy.*
- *The funding can be a big issue too. There is a need for change of the funding model and it should be addressed by the government. For example, engineering plants might require a certain set of skills. So, there is demand for trained and job ready employees, but due to the funding issue, bureaucracy, and the way the entire structure is set up, in practice we cannot provide the adequate supply of qualified workforce within the timeframe expected by the industry despite the demand.*

- *We link with employers on regular basis. We also run pilot modules before they became part of the course. We meet with employers to check which core competences they need and design modules around those key skills. Many of our modules and programmes are bespoke modules/programmes that meet LOs associated with a qualification placed at the particular level on the national framework and at the same time, they meet the employers' requirements including accessing later a license to practice (where applicable).*
- *Yes, we have effective structures in place. Apart from employers' engagement, employers' participation in the Exam Board is crucial. We heavily rely on employers' feedback which helps us to calibrate our courses accordingly.*

The figures from Greece below show no respondents that disagree but 50 % that neither agree nor disagree to this key statement. It might indicate a high level of insecurity about the existence of these clear and effective structures.

7. Learners can be confident that you / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET. GREECE

- 10%
- 50%
- 40%

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The Greek comments were:

- *We do our best. Always ask for their opinion*
- *There are standardized procedures for participation of employers in the evaluation of curricula effectiveness*
- *There are certain procedures to ensure the employers' involvement and participation*
- *There are certain procedures in place but are not extremely clear and they cannot ensure the employers' involvement*
- *Partially yes. However, if there is a certified quality system that takes into account many variables, then the above statement will be totally true.*

- *There are clear structures and procedures that ensure the involvement of employers. However, it will be better if this process could take place at central level (national level) and not at institute level.*
- *To be developed standardized procedures that are not based on VET providers/trainers' and employers' willingness to participate in/involve*
- *There are questionnaires that are completed by stakeholders and ensure the information flow.*
- *Questionnaires and interviews*
- *There are evaluation procedures which are guaranteed provision of high quality VET programs*

4.8 Evaluation of effectiveness

Evaluation are a key activity in any kind of learning and in any type of quality system. Many stakeholders can be involved in the evaluation process and especially the voice of the employers and enterprises is interesting, as they hopefully are employing the VET students after ended education.

We have asked the respondents to what degree do you agree with the following statement:

==You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs?==

On a scale from:

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Neither Agree nor Disagree - Agree to Strongly Agree

And asked them to justify their choice.

Totally shows the results below that 84 % agrees in that the VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective VET is to meeting their needs. Only 3 % neither agree nor disagree and 13 % disagree.
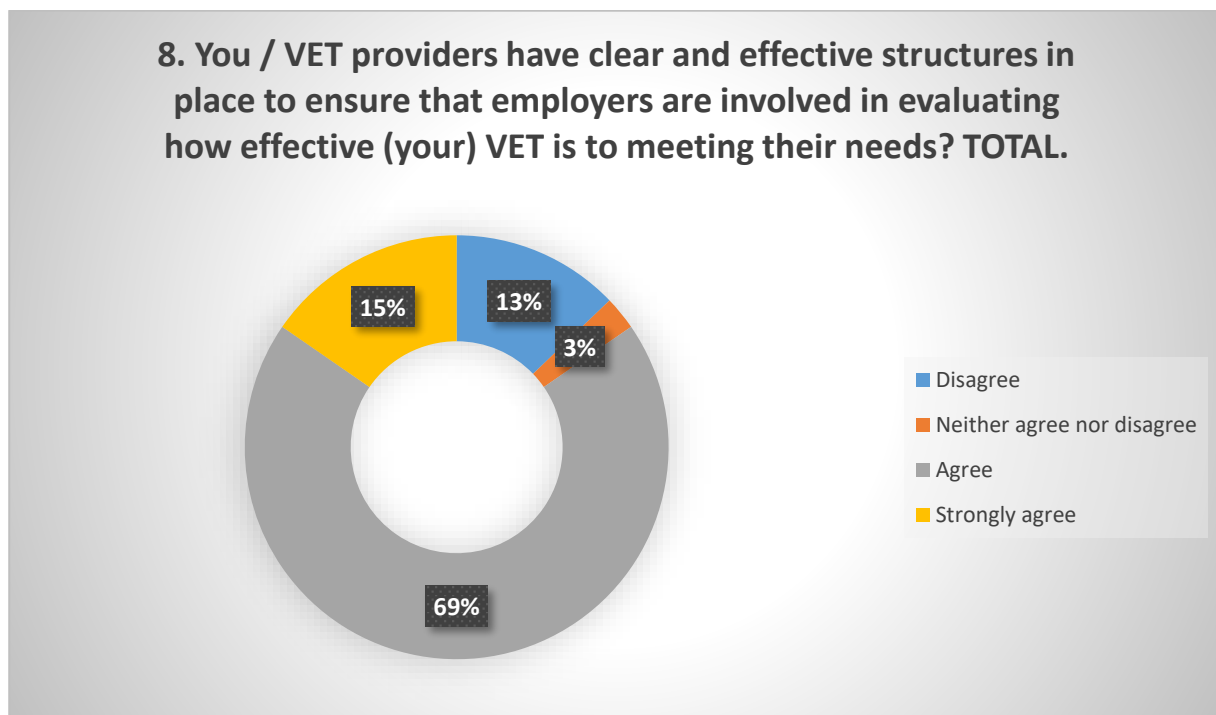

8. You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs? TOTAL.

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

In Sweden and Greece are all the respondents convinced in that they have clear and effective structures in this matter. 90 % of the Swedish respondents agree in the statement and 10 % strongly agree.

8. You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs? SWEDEN


The respondents from Sweden use the following arguments:

- *We use the management board to evaluate our training and also the tutors at WBL sites*
- *Most of feedback from employers are received after WBL period. They evaluate the competences the student received by VET program, So the answer are WBL student evaluation by employers*
- *Again this is done through management board. The employers in the management board evaluate the program continuously to ensure that it meets their needs*
- *Yes – again; we have guidelines for that*

40 % of the respondents in Greece strongly agree and 60 % agree in the statement.

8. You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs? GREECE.
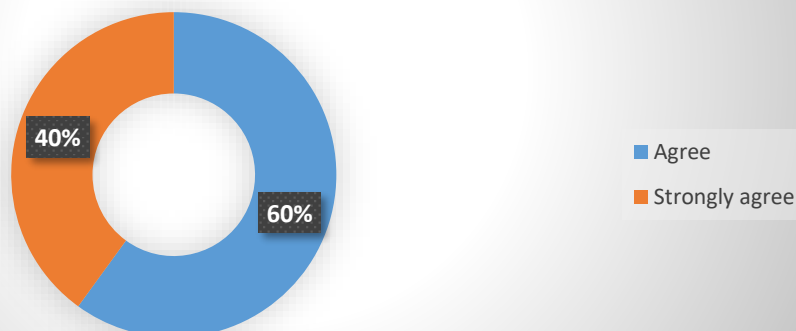
The Greek comments were:

- *There is a certain process. In iVET there is the book of apprentership, while in cVET questionnaires are filled in.*
- *Through questionnaires dissemination*
- *Evaluation procedures during and at the end of VET courses*
- *Questionnaires aimed to monitor the level of satisfaction of learner's performance*
- *Evaluation questionnaires*
- *Assessment during all VET program lifetime*
- *Questionnaires*

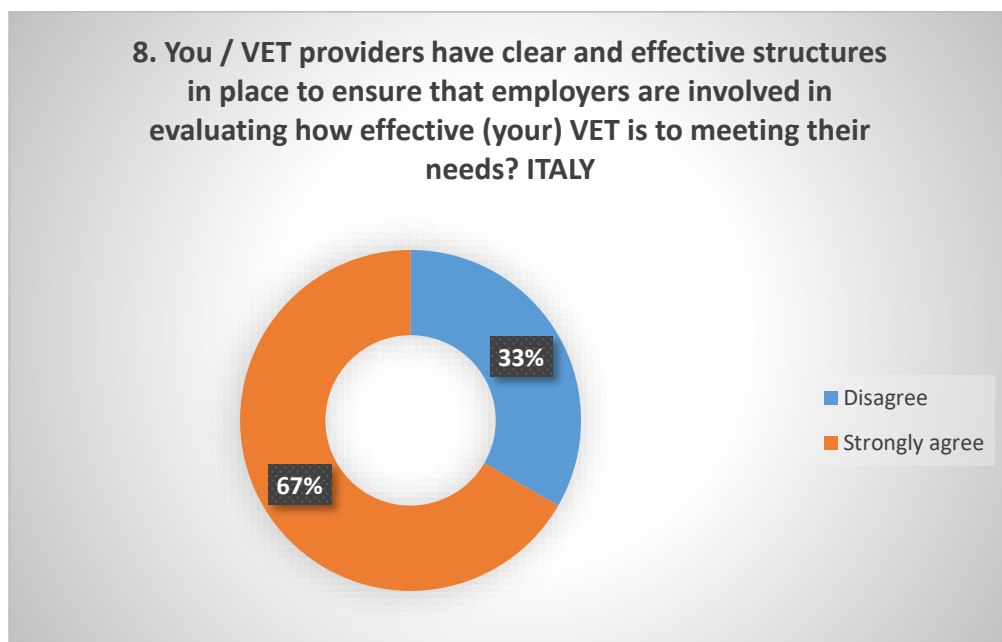In Italy are the answers split into two groups: 67 % strongly agree and 33 % disagree.

8. You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs? ITALY

- Disagree **33%**
- Strongly agree **67%**

The majority of the national Italian respondents strongly agreed in this statement and had the following arguments:

- *Through follow up and debriefing (during the training course)*
- *UBI Academy provides a questionnaire on course satisfaction at the end of the training activity and for some training activities, a questionnaire to assess the level of learning achieved*
- *CESPIM has monitoring tools to evaluate its training activities, to ensure the companies satisfaction*
- *It is refered to the EQAVET certification and it should become a common model for schools*

One of the national Italian respondents and some of the international respondents disagreed in this statement with the following arguments:

- *Not clear and effective structure (Italy)*
- *PAIZ uses 3 levels of Kirpatrick Evaluation model for the majority of clients, yet satisfaction evaluation is satisfactory (Poland)*

The Irish respondents use a broader range of the scale by having 70 % of the respondents answering agree or strongly agree, 10 % neither agree nor disagree and finally 20 % that disagree.
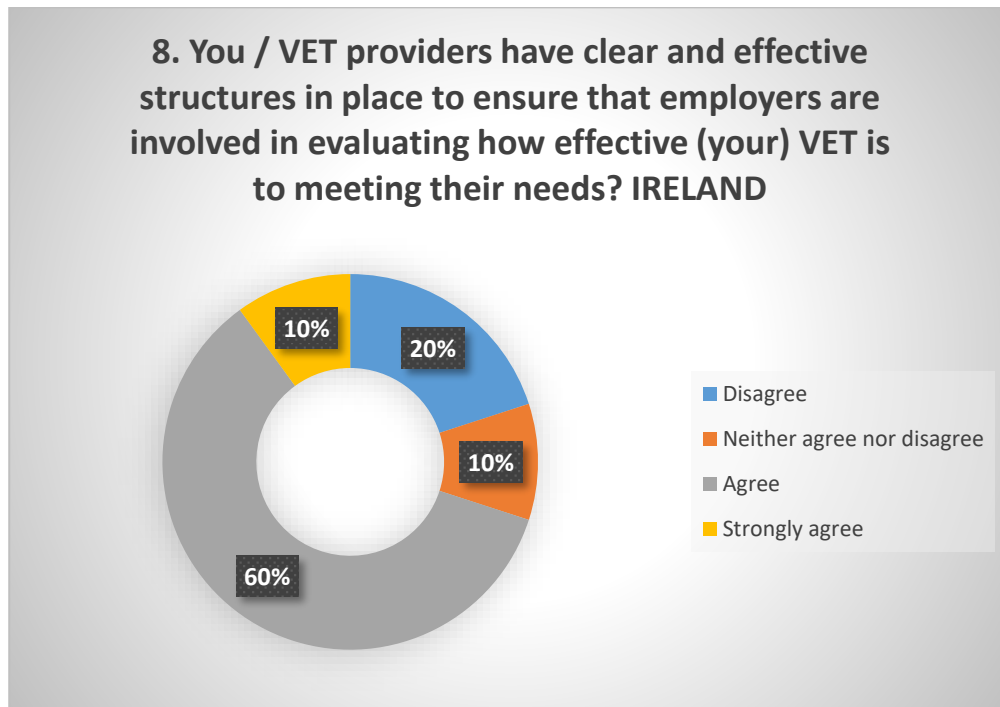
The 70 % of the Irish respondents answering agree or strongly agree motivate it by

- *As mentioned, we are confident that we have effective structure in place, making our programmes relevant for the labour market needs because we obtain regular feedback from employers. It should be mandatory for every VET programme run across the sector to engage and secure verifiable feedback from employers to ensure that the programme meets the needs of the industry.*
- *Yes, we have effective structure in place, we have people from the industry on our working groups who review and advise on the content of our programmes. We also engage with stakeholders and professional bodies all the time.*
- *Yes, I suppose we have effective structure in place that involve employers. To give you an example – we run specific courses for Civil Service. There is a pre-course questionnaire which is mandatory and there is also regular post-course evaluation, so the employer can easily assess the effectiveness of the programmes as there is data regarding the starting point, the base prior to the course that can be compared with the post-course evaluation. So, it is easy to assess the impact of the training and the effectiveness of the programme. In*

addition, Springboard programmes or training for Skillnets[4] - requalifying, upskilling, re-skilling – the bottom line is that all the programmes are designed in a way that graduates are job ready almost from day one.

- *The structure to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective our VET provision and delivery are, is not entirely in place yet. We have employers' and learners' representative on the board, but the level of involvement could have been greater.*
  In addition, we offer entrepreneurial modules, modules on career preparations, on communication and other soft skills that enhance graduates' employability. Over 90% of our staff regularly talk and link with subject matter experts and have opportunity for professional L&D. We also offer active inclusion support for disadvantaged learners, so apart from gaining qualifications it is also about targeting specific groups to boost social mobility skills and social inclusion.

- *Apart from the regular assessment all our programmes undergo double evaluations. The first one concerns evaluation (learning experience etc.) at the individual level to assess if we met the learner's needs. The second evaluation - organisational level - to assess if we met specific needs and requirements of the company/employer. Organisational level evaluations are conducted with the representatives of the company/employer and so far, have proven to be the most effective way to enhance and re-calibrate the programmes to provide even better VET. In addition, organisational evaluations help to build deeper and more meaningful relationship with the employers.*

The 20 % of the Irish respondents that disagree in statement argue

- *There is a need for employer engagement before the programme starts and when it starts. The reality is that there is a quite high level of engagement at the beginning particularly at the design stage, but then the level of engagement drops. It would be ideal to evaluate the course regularly and forecast the needs at least 6 months in advance.*

- *Currently, we do not have an effective structure in place, but we are working towards it. The structure and the relevant policies are being put in place, so going future, things will improve.*

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[4] Skillnet Ireland (previously known as Skillnets) is the National Agency for Workforce Learning
https://www.skillnetireland.ie/

4.9 Tools and suggestions for improvements

In the final section of each interview had the interviewer the possibility to raise a number of additional question – depending on how the interview had developed and on the motivation of the respondent.

4.9.1 Improvements

All the interviewers took advantage of the situation during the interviews, and asked the respondents about their ideas for improvement of the current situation.

Several respondents were asked:

> How could things be done better to make sure employers' current and future needs are met by VET?

The answers differ between the respondents, but a selection of the answers are presented below:

- *More communication and WBL experience (Italy)*
- *Periodical interviews with workers in different sectors (Italy)*
- *Progressive integration of educational institutions and companies (Italy)*
- *Organizing periodic monitoring committees (Italy)*
- *Changing the system and providing professional profiles in classrooms and/or in laboratories (Italy)*
- *Constant dialogue among (needs analysis, meetings, HR conferences, national Qualifications Frames, platforms for VET providers offers/employers' call for tenders) (Poland)*
- *Dialogue between business and science institutions promoted by the Government (Lithuania)*
- *Efforts to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness should be based on a coordinated approach: promoting apprenticeships must go alongside improving quality of programs, which includes, but is not limited to better working conditions, stronger focus on their educational value, and broader recognition of apprentices' rights, as well as more accessible information (Spain)*
- *Engagement of employers in planning process of VET programs (Greece)*
- *To be active member of planning (Greece)*
- *Discussion between trainers and employers before VET curricula implementation (Greece)*
- *Enhancement of WBL (Greece)*
- *Continuous and open discussion among Ministry of Education and employers (Greece)*
- *Involvement of employers in planning phase of VET curricula (Greece)*
- *Continuous involvement of employers, mandatory participation of employers in all VET programmes either as trainers or as WBL tutors (Greece)*
- *Public dialogue/discussion among Ministry, VET providers and employers (Greece)*

- *Employers should be involved in the certification process of learners. Moreover, during certification exams, a practical session should be added except for the theoretical one (Greece)*
- *Continuous meetings between trainers and employers (Greece)*
- *Developing methods or tools for joint understanding of learning outcomes (Sweden)*
- *This is the responsibility both of providers and national agency to assurance that VET programs are addressing the needs of labour market. However, defining skill needs by employer in a VET program is the responsibility of the providers and employers. Regarding the second aspects, there is a need for further development of methods and tools (Sweden)*
- *Develop methods to better define skills needed by employer in term of learning outcomes. Usually we listen to employers but still they complain about some skills or lack of them on our students (Sweden)*
- *We don't think that we can engage them more than what they are engaged now. They have limited time. Participating in management board and providing WBL site is what they do. Requiring more could be too much for them (Sweden)*
- *One area that needs to be developed is how to predict skill needs with regards to future innovation in the occupation. It takes 2 years to educate a student in our program. We need to include those skills in our presents VET programs. This need more elaborated mechanism (Sweden)*
- *In some region in Sweden they have started to plan new VET program at regional level. They plan the programs based on regional development plan which is elaborated by regional authorities and employers in the region. It is a good system that should be implemented in all regions (Sweden)*

4.9.2 Curricula

The development of curricula based on occupational core and key competences is often a challenge. The respondents were then asked

==Which methods are used for adapting occupational core and key competences required by employers for the development of curricula?==

And delivered the following list:

- *Tutoring (Italy)*
- *eLearning (Italy)*
- *Training on the job (Italy)*
- *Job rotation (Italy)*
- *Curriculum update following periodic interviews (Italy)*
- *Labour market/needs analysis (Italy), (Spain)*
- *Meetings with companies and with teachers (Italy)*
- *Questionnaires (Greece)*
- *Training need analysis (Greece)*

- *Field research (e.g., questionnaires dissemination) (Greece)*
- *Change of learning outcomes and new/updated training material (Greece)*
- *Additional training of WBL provision (Greece)*
- *E-learning course (Greece)*
- *Further training at the workplace (training on the job) (Greece)*
- *We are using Learning Outcome method to describe needed competences (Sweden)*
- *Today we are doing it through joint sessions of discussion about the content of the curricula (Sweden)*
- *As providers we try to listen to employers and thereafter define the skills in curricula. However, it can be the situation that discrepancies can occur (Sweden)*
- *Today, this process is done through discussion and continuous feedback. But it is desirable to develop standards or methods for this aim (Sweden)*
- *In order to be sure that the curricula meet the employers demand we need to develop the method for description of the skills or learning objective so there will be same understanding among employers and VET provider (Sweden)*

4.9.3 Job ready

The next question some of the responded answered was:

==How do you/VET providers make sure that learners are 'job ready' from day 1 of finishing their programme(s)?==

This resulted in the following overview

- *Occasional follow up (Italy)*
- *Practical training and continuous updating (Italy)*
- *Asking directly them and SMEs (Italy)*
- *Motivation of the Learners to take part to the programmes. Improvements could be done in order to involve employees in trainings (Italy)*
- *It could be possible through certifications (Italy)*
- *VET Diplomas in the education system have an academic and professional value and attest both an educational level and the professional qualification obtained. These qualifications can be obtained through programmes at three education levels: basic (new diploma available since 2014), intermediate and higher VET, according to the level descriptors provided for these educational levels (Spain)*
- *On the job training where students can apply their skills practically (Lithuania)*
- *PAIZ adopted an extended learning approach (High Performance Learning Journey model) in which the learning is streteched beyond the learning event and extended into learners job tasks, when they learn by practice (as 70 percent of learning happens in the workplace) and exchange of idea (Poland)*
- *Certification exams and continuous assessment of learners (Greece)*
- *Continuous assessment during the VET programmes implementation (Greece)*

- *WBL offers part of skills in order learners to be "job ready" from day 1 (Greece)*
- *All programmes should be supported by practical part or WBL (Greece)*
- *Continuous assessment aimed to assess the level of qualifications (Greece)*
- *We are not sure but we hope that they are ready once they receive their diploma (Greece)*
- *WBL, apprenticeship (Greece)*
- *We do not make sure anything (Greece)*
- *We are not sure, we follow the progress and abilities through the teaching process (Greece)*
- *Assessment of learners (Greece)*
- *By assuring readiness of the students during WBL – 3 times during the education. The evaluation shows how student manage skill requirements at job site (Sweden)*

4.9.4 New teaching styles

Teachers and their teaching styles and methods are one of the most important quality factors in education, so we asked the respondents:

> ==*To what extent have you / VET providers developed methods and tools to promote key competences in VET by the introduction of new teaching styles or methods?*==

Here the answers were:

- *Assessment, role playing, focus group (Italy)*
- *Besides traditional classrooms, internships and on-the-job training, distance learning is increasing, as well as training pills (Italy)*
- *(Not specified) new learning methods (Italy)*
- *Through WBL (Italy)*
- *We try following the labour market's requirements/demands (Greece)*
- *Moderate extent through the enhancement of teaching methods/techniques with up to date teaching tools (Greece)*
- *Very important in comparison to the past. Implementation of up to date methods and tools (Greece)*
- *Enhancement of core and digital competences through the existing training curricula (Greece)*
- *Better than in the past years. We do not teach the curricula content but also we try improving core competences (Greece)*
- *Very different in comparison to the previous years. New approaches in the teaching methods (Greece)*
- *A little bit, initial steps (Greece)*
- *Important (Greece)*
- *Moderate (Greece)*
- *Sufficient extent (Greece)*
- *We need to develop more exercises for key competences and also train trainer (Sweden)*

- *Today we are using both project based learning and problem based learning as pedagogical approaches to emphases key competences (Sweden)*
- *We recruit teachers from business sector. We consider their teaching styles when we hire. However we train them in new leaching styles (Sweden)*
- *This is an area that we need to get better, to work on soft skills. We try to discuss it with our teachers, however we think that we need to develop training materials and also training for teachers on soft skills (Sweden)*
- *Teaching style and key competences are areas that need to be developed more in higher VET. Since there are no demand from agency, there is no motivation at provider level to develop them (Sweden)*

4.9.5 Alternative approaches to employers

In order to get an overview of the alternatives to involving employers we asked:

If you don't involve employers in evaluating the effectiveness of VET, what other measures or approaches do you use to do so?

And this led to these answers:

- *Involvement of trade association, trade unions, working groups of technicians and expert in the field (Italy)*
- *Feedback from managers (Italy)*
- *Currently no particular measures, it only depends on the school ability to improve the effectiveness of VET (Italy)*
- *We already involved them (Greece)*
- *Not applicable (Greece)*
- *Involvement of other competent authorities that are in close relation to employers (e.g., Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), Association of Greek entrepreneurs etc.) (Greece)*
- *Employers are involved as much as the existing resources allow (Greece)*
- *Dissemination of questionnaires or in person interviews or discussion among other relevant authorities/organisations (Greece)*
- *Employers are involved in evaluation by questionnaire and WBL feedbacks (Sweden)*
- *Not applicable in Swedish higher VET (Sweden)*
- *Not relevant, we engage employers (Sweden)*

4.9.6 Follow up on learners

Follow up on the learners status after a period is used in many countries as an indicator for the quality of the education, so we asked:

Do you / VET providers follow up learners after completion to find out their status/destination? For how long? Straight after? 6 months? 1 year? 3 years?

And got the following answers

- *Occasional follow up after 15-30 days of the course (Italy)*
- *Usually 6 months and depending on the personal involvement, even 1 year (Italy)*
- *First 6 months, then a year (Italy)*
- *Not all schools do it, however data started to be collected through the improvement / orientation area (Italy)*
- *Rarely. Companies do it often (Italy)*
- *VET providers do not follow up learners (Lithuania)*
- *PAIZ rarely follows up learners after completion (Poland)*
- *1 year, twice a year via telephone calls or questionnaire (Greece)*
- *18 months through telephone calls (once per 6 months) (Greece)*
- *Yes, for 18 months in the past and for 12 months nowadays (Greece)*
- *Graduate tracking: Our graduates are tracked 3 months after completion of the programme. (Ireland)*
- *Graduate tracking: In place - conducted 6 months after completion of the programme. (Ireland)*
- *Learners tracking: Yes, but it is informal. Four months after course completion, our tutors contact graduates by phone or email. (Ireland)*
- *Learners tracking: We did it in the past, but since it is not mandatory, we don't have any formal structure in place. (Ireland)*
- *Learners tracking: Yes, we conduct destination survey every year - 6 months after the graduation. Therefore, we know that high proportion of our students use our courses as a progression route to HE. Others secure full-time, permanent employment in the relevant sectors of the economy. (Ireland)*
- *Graduates tracking: Yes, we follow up on graduates. More importantly, we capture data regarding our graduates and as we run a number of events, we always invite them to these events. (Ireland)*
- *Graduates tracking – we report the results, but we don't follow graduates' progression. (Ireland)*
- *Learners tracking: We do not track learners. We monitor outcomes and track learner's progress from one programme to another provided that each programme is offered by us, but there is no system in place to track our graduates. (Ireland)*
- *Learners tracking: Yes - we have a policy and effective system in place. Our graduates are tracked 6 months after completion of their programme.   We also monitor outcomes and track learner's progression and employability. (Ireland)*
- *More importantly, in cooperation with the funder (SOLAS) and a selected big employer in Ireland we have started a research investigating the link between education, training and employees' retention. We hypothesised that workers who have completed our programme with be more interested in continuing their professional development and will more likely re-engage in another upskilling programme funded by their employer which in return*

should have a positive impact on loyalty culture and retention rates. This kind of data will be extremely valuable – it will effectively demonstrate evidence of impact. (Ireland)

- *We follow up them 2 years after the education (Sweden)*
- *We follow their status 1 year after the training (Sweden)*
- *3 years (Sweden)*
- *2 years but needs to be minimum 3 years (Sweden)*
- *1 year (Sweden)*

4.9.7 Transparency challenges

In order to get an overview of what is the reasons when VET does not perform as the labour market demands, we asked:

==*When VET does not train up to skills, competences and knowledge level the labour market requires this is due to lack of transparency of both sides of the coin (transparency of what education is doing, and transparency on what the profession is really about) – Is that correct?*==

And got the following answers:

- *Yes, but above all lack of communication and knowledge of the respective realities (Italy)*
- *No, it refers to issues related to processes and policies (Greece)*
- *No, it is lack of communication and understanding (Greece)*
- *This is due to established practices that are difficult to change (Greece)*
- *Partially true as sometimes the correlation among VET programmes and labour market needs is not very effective (Greece)*
- *Partially. There are certain approaches both in VET providers and in employers, which sometimes are not common (Greece)*
- *Yes, it is true (Greece)*
- *No, it depends on policies implemented (Greece)*
- *I think yes. There is not any certain process. We are used to implement some steps and each institute does its best (Greece)*
- *No, due to insufficient communication among authorities/stakeholders (Greece)*
- *It is lack of culture of cooperation on both sides, they have to find a common language with same terminology (Sweden)*
- *Yes (Sweden)*
- *It is difficult to have common terminology for defining skills and competences. Sometimes we misunderstand each other (Sweden)*
- *We think that it would be better to have same standard in education as in business when we define skills and competences. It will help to develop relevant curricula (Sweden)*
- *Yes but is not the case of higher VET in Sweden (Sweden)*
- *Lack of continuous contact and also mechanism and methods got cooperation (Sweden)*
- *There is two reasons for the lack of cooperation and relationship and second lack of common language. In higher VET we have created a good system for cooperation and*

relationship but we need to develop also a common terminology specially regarding curricula (Sweden)

4.9.8 Common language

The direct question of the need for a common language was raised in some interview as follows:

<mark>*Education and labour market do not share a common language: education talks about skills and competences (more often even only on general competences … that is by far the worst scenario); employers talk about tasks. That does not match. – Is that correct?*</mark>

The answers were very interesting:

- *Yes, a common syllabus would actually be needed (Italy)*
- *We do not agree. Employers nowadays are actually being very attentive to competences which go beyond tasks (Italy)*
- *True at some level, but in general it depends on the awareness of employers. At large companies, HR specialists have sufficient knowledge to translate one into another. On the other hand, companies, (e.g. PAIZ), use tools to do such translation (High Performance Learning journey) (Poland)*
- *No, over the last years not only VET providers but also employers are referred to skills in order to respond to tasks   (Greece)*
- *Also employers talk about skills nowadays (Greece)*
- *In order to implement task, you need to have the skills, so I disagree with this statement (Greece)*
- *Both parties use common terms during the last decade (Greece)*
- *Both tasks and skills are interdepedent. Maybe the terminology differs but the meaning is the same (without skills you are not able to implement tasks) (Greece)*
- *We need to find the golden mean (Greece)*
- *How can someone respond to certain tasks if he/she does not have the skills? Tasks and skills are linked each other (Greece)*
- *All stakeholders (trainers, employers and learners) are referred to skills (Greece)*
- *No, two approaches should be aligned (Greece)*
- *Yes, in VET we talk about learning outcomes and employers talk about task performance. We need to make bridge to close that gap (Sweden)*
- *It is difficult to have common terminology for defining skills and competences. Sometimes we misunderstand each other (Sweden)*
- *We think that it would be better to have same standard in education as in business when we define skills and competences. It will help to develop relevant curricula (Sweden)*
- *Yes, we need to develop same references or technology (Sweden)*
- *Yes, sometimes we think that the curricula has covered all the skills that the employers expressed they need but still they are not fully satisfied. We need to develop same language (Sweden)*

- *Yes, sometimes employers do not understand the learning objectives in curricula and they need to be explained for them (Sweden)*

4.9.9 Employers involvement

The direct question of the need for employers involvement was raised in some interview as follows:

> *Covering of labour market needs appears to be less in those situations in which employers are hardly involved in the process of defining aims and objectives of education. – Is that correct?*

The answers were very interesting:

- *Correct. Their participation in an active way is very important (Greece)*
- *Yes, as employers' needs are covered (Greece)*
- *Yes, it is crucial redefining of aims and objectives in cooperation with employers (Greece)*
- *It depends on occupation and what each VET institute offers (Greece)*
- *Partially. (Sweden)*
- *On the positive side:*
  The HVE system ensure that the planned VET program is based on labour market needs. This is done by checking applications by provider with employers and their associations. That the VET program content has been developed through dialogue between VET provider and employer.
  On the need side:
  There is a need to express the competences demanded by employers with regards to task at working place in Learning outcomes in the curriculum. There is need to develop such mechanisms as a common language between employers and VET schools (Sweden)
  Yes, but this is a process for both VET providers and employers. They need to find motivation and arguments for why this cooperation is to benefit for both (Sweden)
- *Yes but not in Swedish higher VET (Sweden)*

4.10 Transfer of experiences

Even if most countries, VET systems and VET providers often find themselves unique and with their own special contexts believe we in that many experiences can be usefull and transferred from one context to another.

We have asked the respondents:

<mark>*Which of your experiences do you think can be transferred to other countries/sectors?*</mark>

And we got the following answers:

- *Assessment procedures (Greece)*
- *Implementation of WBL (Greece)*
- *Regional Professional Qualifiers (QPR): training standards (skills, abilities and Knowledge) described in "Profilo Regionale" (Italy)*
- *In Lombardia, educational institutes provide different kinds of internships, in order to counter the skills-mismatch issue. The internship is a temporary experience of training and work that can be accessed by all people of working age. It is one of the tools of the Lombardy Region to support the work-placement of people, in particular of young people, through a training experience in direct contact with the labour market (Italy)*
- *Strengthening of soft skills, in particular transversal skills (Italy)*
- *All WBL experiences as an internal tutor of the school and the design of learning paths (Italy)*
- *OTMET – On-Job Training Models in Europe and Training of Trainers (Erasmus+ project) Outcomes:*
    - *WBL model for HEIs and adaptation of lectures appropriate to on-job training activities*
    - *A "training of facilitators" program for academics and entrepreneurs to increase the efficiency of on-job training activities*
    - *An e-platform to use as training mediator and develop materials for the platform itself*
    - *The end result of the project is to create awareness among all participants and relevant stakeholders about the importance of collaboration between university and industry to increase the skills and employability of HE students. (Lithuania)*
- *High Performance Learning Journey (Poland)*
- *Engaging with employers and industry representatives/participation in events organised by employers/industry (Ireland)*
- *Building formal and active engagement with industry ambasadors/ industry champions, local chambers of commerce, professional bodies - this is a real opportunity for VET providers to get insights into what is leading the agenda and who the key players at national policy level and on the ground are; (Ireland)*

- *Hosting various business events for employers and/or with employers showcasing good practices e.g., Business Breakfasts, Breakfast Briefings, Career Fairs that bring together subject matter experts, industry representatives and staff; (Ireland)*
- *Listening to employers and being open to their constructive critique; (Ireland)*
- *Responding to the needs of industry by designing and offering bespoke programmes that deliver core skills and key competences; (Ireland)*
- *Industry-led approach with employers' involvement in programme design and delivery and review to calibrate the programme for the needs of industry; (Ireland)*
- *Double evaluations/feedback (employer evaluation and learner evaluation of the programme) (Ireland)*
- *A flexible approach to delivery and around module completion (Ireland)*
- *Modularisation; (Ireland)*
- *Inviting subject matter experts/industry representatives to deliver some modules; (Ireland)*
- *Developing new traineeships and apprenticeships; (Ireland)*
- *Converting old inefficient programmes to traineeship and apprenticeship models; (Ireland)*
- *Offering branded courses (e.g. Lidl Diploma in…) based on generic programmes leading to QA assured and recognized qualifications on the framework. Benefits: learners associate the learning and training with the company they work for. The employer is involved in design, deliver and provision of the branded programmes based on bespoke modules handed pick by employer to ensure best value for money; (Ireland)*
- *Hosting special one-day award ceremony for graduates of xyz company. Making it special by inviting a government representative, ideally a minister; (Ireland)*
- *Investing in research and disseminating evidence-based data on the impact of close collaboration with the employers. Such data speaks volumes; (Ireland)*
- *Having a dedicated Employer Engagement Unit or a liaison officer appointed specifically to link with the employers; (Ireland)*
- *Investing in teaching staff training and development e.g., off-site placement and training to ensure that they are up to speed; (Ireland)*
- *Employer-led approach to ensure relevance and delivery of key skills for all VET programmes (Ireland)*
- *A mixed-method teaching approach (WBL + academic part); (Ireland)*
- *Using a variety of assessment that should be based on both: learning skills and practical/technical core skills, company-based assignments etc. (Ireland)*
- *Using a validation panel to accredit programmes with experts in the field and to have industry representatives/employers on those panels actively engaged in the process;*
- *Inviting employers to participate on the Exam Board; (Ireland)*
- *Running pilot modules, designed specifically around a particular set of skills that are later delivered on top of another mandatory modules; (Ireland)*
- *Offering learners, the best opportunity in terms of LLL and job preparedness (e.g., teaching soft skills, interviews skills, CV writing, communication skills and offering mock interviews with employers in the sector relevant to the course; (Ireland)*

- *Ensuring work experience matches the course content so that student(s) are given the best possible experience. (Ireland)*
- *Ongoing communication, ideally on a weekly basis between employer and course tutor to obtain regular feedback and better prepare student(s) for jobs. (Ireland)*
- *A learner-centred approach in terms of provision and delivery of VET programmes. (Ireland)*
- *Developing VET curricula in cooperation with employers from the sector (Sweden)*
- *Using WBL feedback as quality check for VET programs (Sweden)*
- *Learning outcome plan for WBL period (Sweden)*
- *Our curricula for WBL, it measures the job readiness of students (Sweden)*
- *Management board. Each VET program should have management board (Sweden)*
- *Our planning of WBL. It is a good system for measuring skills (Sweden)*
- *The contact with the industry, making all the interviews and researches before putting a programme together - that is the very best way, in my mind, to get the best people for the future (Sweden)*
- *Set some requirements to the students in relation to start at the educations (Denmark)*
- *Make roo for the students to be young during their education (Denmark)*
- *Be experimental in the attitude to the daily teaching methods and styles (Denmark)*

And we asked the respondents

<mark>*Which of your experiences do you think can NOT be transferred to other countries/sectors?*</mark>

And we got the following answers, that as well can be seen as barriers and challenges:

- *Definition of learning outcomes by central authority (Greece)*
- *Very specific technical training in agreements with regulations (Italy)*
- *Not every country will have the same level of professional body representatives and/or access to their wide range of networks; (Ireland)*
- *Some VET providers might not have enough resources to engage in the same scale and level as bigger VET providers; (Ireland)*
- *Funding models; (Ireland)*
- *Custom and practice in Ireland (casual approach); (Ireland)*
- *Parental influence on the education and career choices of their offspring; (Ireland)*
- *Standardisation, consistency and nature of VET provision; (Ireland)*
- *Establishing an effective, flexible structure and connectivity with SMEs. (Ireland)*
- *The higher VET system is based on regional needs and is highly decentralized. This has been facilitated in a legislative framework. Without those changes, it is not possible to adjust VET to future skill need (Sweden)*
- *Don't know but we think the freedom providers have in developing curricula together with employers. There are not much regulations*

One of the Danish respondents asked for the students perspective. What are their needs and demands? They experience that a growing number of students are not focused in the demand from the enterprises but in their own dreams and needs. An interesting perspective.

4.11 Conclusions

This section will sum up the most important conclusions for the main questions we have asked. The questions will be take one by one and both the overall conclusion and the most interesting details will be presented.

The VET system in our country is good at predicting future skills needs.

The overall accumulated results show relatively big differences between the countries.

13 % disagree and state that their VET system is not good at predicting future skills needs, where 59% find that their VET system is good at it. It is surprising to see that 28% neither agree nor disagree to this important and fundamental expectation from every VET system.

In Sweden and Denmark does all the respondents find that their VET system are good at predicting future skills. This picture from Sweden differ from the one in Greece, where only 50 % agrees and where 50 % neither agree nor disagree. Both Italy and Ireland give a more complex picture. In Italy answer 11 % that they disagree where the figure is 40 % among the Irish respondents. On the other side does 44 % agree in Italy and roughly the same in Ireland with 40 %.

The VET system in our country is good at avoiding skills shortages.

The accumulated figures for the statement regarding avoiding skills shortage show almost the same picture as for how good the VET systems is at predicting future skills needs. 20 % disagree and 52 % either agree or strongly agree. Again here does 28 % neither agree nor disagree on a question most stakeholders would have expected them to be sure about their opinion and contribution.

The Swedish respondents agree 100 % in that their VET system is good at avoiding skills shortages, as presented below. In Greece does 60 % agree and 40 % neither agree nor disagree, which indicates confidence in the VET system and especially in the VET providers' contribution to avoid skills shortages. 33 % of the Italian respondents disagree and 22 % agree in that their VET system is good at avoiding skills shortages. The biggest group of respondents are the 45 % that neither agree nor disagree. 50 % of the Irish respondents disagree and 30 % neither agree nor disagree, which indicates that many providers do not find their own contribution to avoiding skills shortages very high.

The tools for providers for getting relevant and up to date information about the needs of employers include:

Active participation in working groups among the different VET providers and trade associations and companies

- *Interviews with stakeholders*
- *Involvement of employers in teaching activities*
- *External agency monitoring of future skill needs*
- *Coordination at regional level there is a coordination*
- *Network among local/regional employers*

The employers and companies are involved in many ways and by many means:

- *Focus groups*
- *Formal/informal connection with VET schools, especially teachers*
- *Questionnaires that provide information about future skills*
- *Presentations, seminars, through the chambers*
- *Cooperation with regional VET coordinators to express skill needs*
- *Involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of VET programs*

Vocational provision is according to OECD often rooted in education institutions, tending to develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economies

23 % of the total respondents disagree with the statement and 28 % neither agree nor disagree. It leaves almost half of the respondents (49 %) stating that they agree or strongly agree in that vocational provision develop its own dynamic (way of doing things), and that this can be too separated from the fast-changing world of modern economics. In many ways a very self-critical point of view.

The respondents from Sweden are very clear in their answers. 50 % disagree and 50 % neither agree nor disagree. This picture from Sweden differs from what the results from both Italy, Ireland and Greece shows. In Italy does 78 % agree or strongly agree in the statement, and only 11 % disagree and 11 % neither agree nor disagree. The results from Ireland are supporting the critical view from Italy with 50% of the respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement, and only 30 % that disagree and 20 % that neither agree nor disagree.

Learners can be confident that you/VET providers are good at making sure your/their programmes are relevant to the needs of the labour market.

Totally shows the results that 90 % of all the respondents agree or strongly agree in, that learners can be confident in the relevance of the delivered programs. Only 2 % disagree and 8 % neither agree nor disagree. This is a very positive reply and show that the responding VET providers have a very high trust in their own work.

The respondents from Sweden shows the highest degree of self-confidence with 80 % that agree and 20 % that strongly agree in the statement. The respondents from Ireland show almost the same high level of trust in their own programs relevance as the respondents from Sweden with 90 % answering agree and strongly agree. Only 10 % neither agree nor disagree in the statement. Greece follow exactly the same pattern as Ireland with 90 % answering agree and strongly agree. Only 10 % neither agree nor disagree in the statement. The Italian respondents include 11 % that disagree and 22 % that neither agree nor disagree in the statement. But it still leaves 67 % to agree or strongly agree in the statement. Again a positive judgment of the VET providers' activities regarding programs relevant to the needs of the labour market.

VET authorities require that (your) VET provision is accountable for its relevance to the needs of employers/companies – and have a system for making sure of this.

Totally shows the results that 67 % of the respondents agree or strongly agree in this statement. Only 5 % disagree and 28 % neither agree nor disagree. So the conclusion must be, that the requirements exists in most countries.

In Sweden answer the respondents very clear with 80 % agree and 20 % strongly agree. In Greece does 70 % of the respondents agree in the statement but the final 30 % neither agree nor disagree. 67 % of the Italian respondents agree and strongly agree in the statement, but on the other side are there 11 % that disagree and 22 % that neither agree nor disagree. The responses from Ireland follow almost the same pattern as in Italy with 70 % that agree and strongly agree and only 10 % that disagree. Again here 20 % that neither agree nor disagree.

You/VET providers are encouraged to teach/organize training in ways that promote and strengthen the key skills/core competences that employers need?

Totally shows the results that 87 % agree and strongly agree in the statement, and only 5 % disagree and 8 % neither agree nor disagree.

The results from Sweden below show 90 % that agree and 10% strongly agree. The Italian and Irish responses are split into two groups. Italy with 89 % that agree and strongly agree in the statement and 11 % that disagree. Finally, are the 100 % support to the statement in Greece with 60 % that agree and 40 % that strongly agree in the statement.

Learners can be confident that you/VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that you plan (your) VET.

Totally shows the results that 74 % agree and strongly agree in the statement and only 8 % disagree and 18 % neither agree nor disagree.

All the respondents from Sweden support this statement; 90 % answers that they agree and 10 % that they strongly agree. These answers differ from the answers collected from both Ireland, Italy and Greece as the following figures will show. The Italian answers are using most of the scale we offered the respondents. 67 % answer agree or strongly agree in the statement, 11 % disagree and a relatively large group of 22 % states that they neither agree nor disagree in that VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in the way that they plan VET. The answers from Ireland and Greece show almost similar patterns regarding the number of respondents that agree or strongly agree in the statement. In Ireland are there 60 % that agree or strongly agree and in Greece are the number in total 50 %. The figures from Greece show no respondents that disagree but 50 % that neither agree nor disagree to this key statement. It might indicate a high level of insecurity about the existence of these clear and effective structures.

==You / VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective (your) VET is to meeting their needs?==

Totally shows the results that 84 % agrees in that the VET providers have clear and effective structures in place to ensure that employers are involved in evaluating how effective VET is to meeting their needs. Only 3 % neither agree nor disagree and 13 % disagree.

In Sweden and Greece are all the respondents convinced in that they have clear and effective structures in this matter. 90 % of the Swedish respondents agree in the statement and 10 % strongly agree. 40 % of the respondents in Greece strongly agree and 60 % agree in the statement. In Italy are the answers split into two groups: 67 % strongly agree and 33 % disagree. The Irish respondents use a broader range of the scale by having 70 % of the respondents answering agree or strongly agree, 10 % neither agree nor disagree and finally 20 % that disagree.

In addition to the results of the analysis of the answers from the interviews have we collected a number of suggestions for improvement within a number of selected areas.

==How could things be done better to make sure employers' current and future needs are met by VET?==

The respondents presents a number of ideas and proposals, where the most important are more communication at all levels and in all phases from planning via implementation, evaluation and follow-up, work based learning, participation in committees and boards, regional and national.

==Which methods are used for adapting occupational core and key competences required by employers for the development of curricula?==

The respondents mentioned training on the job, tutoring, needs analysis, E-learning, learning outcome, joint sessions with VET providers and enterprises as the key methods. Finally it is

proposed to develop standards or methods for how to translate the damands into learning objectives. There seem to be a needfor a tool or method so providers and employers can make a joint translation of skills in a VET program

How do you/VET providers make sure that learners are 'job ready' from day 1 of finishing their programme(s)?

The answers was mainly focusing on asking the students and enterprises directly, follow-up, work based learning, assessments of learners, certificates, diploma, apprenticeship,

To what extent have you / VET providers developed methods and tools to promote key competences in VET by the introduction of new teaching styles or methods?

Among the many proposals are internship, training of trainers, WBL, project based learning, problems based learning and finally maybe requirements from the authorities. There seem to a need to develop the part regarding key competences and to develop teachers training and training materials.

If you don't involve employers in evaluating the effectiveness of VET, what other measures or approaches do you use to do so?

The majority of the respondents answered that this was not relevant for them, because they had close cooperation with and involvement of the enterprises. Other answered different organisations within employment and trade unions.

Do you / VET providers follow up learners after completion to find out their status/destination? For how long? Straight after? 6 months? 1 year? 3 years?

The answers range from no follow up to 15 - 30 days after the course, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, to 1, 2 and 3 years. The follow up is often done by mail or phone.

The answers showed very different answers both across national respondents and across countries. This indicates that there might be a need for a kind of common quality structure each stakeholder can expect to be in use in order to set the minimum quality level.

When VET does not train up to skills, competences and knowledge level the labour market requires this is due to lack of transparency of both sides of the coin (transparency of what education is doing, and transparency on what the profession is really about) – Is that correct?

The answers range from yes to no. Most respondents mention lack of communication, understanding and knowledge, established practices that are difficult to change, no common terminology for defining skills and competences. It is proposed that "*we need to develop a common terminology specially regarding curricula."*

Education and labour market do not share a common language: education talks about skills and competences (more often even only on general competences … that is by far the worst scenario); employers talk about tasks. That does not match. – Is that correct?

This question seem to have opened for a fundamental challenge for vocational education and training - regarding the languages used by the different stakeholders.

The answers are very interesting and show in some countries a demand for a common language for VET providers and enterprises: a common syllabus would be needed, we need to develop same references or technology. Other mention that the two worlds already have come closer to each other.

Covering of labour market needs appears to be less in those situations in which employers are hardly involved in the process of defining aims and objectives of education. – Is that correct?

The answers are very similar between the respondents: they conclude that employers involvement are needed and in place in most situations.

Which of your experiences do you think can be transferred to other countries/sectors?

The respondents had formulated a long list of experiences they find possible to transfer. Among these are first of all to build employers formal, ongoing and active engagement in all dimensions e.g. planning, implementation, evaluation, follow up through management boards, contacts and events. The need for a legislative framework that makes regional focus and employers involvement mandatory is among the many suggestions together with WBL, internship and apprenticeships as the key quality assurance dimensions.

Assessment, focus on regional perspectives and needs, focus on soft and transversal needs and upgrading the award ceremony for graduates are other proposals for activities that might can be transferred across providers and countries. Finally are mentioned: respond to the need of industry, establish a dedicated Employer Engagement Unit or liaison officer and offer branded courses to companies.