



## Newsletter 1

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### Involving social partners in dual VET governance

Exploring the contribution of social partners in the design, renewal and implementation of dual VET.

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### Background

The topic of dual vocational education and training (VET) has gained growing relevance in recent years. Several European countries have implemented dual systems of VET which combine workplace learning in an enterprise with classroom teaching in an educational institution. Dual VET model is considered particularly pertinent in times of high youth unemployment, as it can facilitate smooth transitions to employment or handle the problem of skill mismatch.

Dual VET is a complex system where different collective actors (state bodies, companies, trade unions, employer organisations, etc.) interplay and try to coordinate their activities. In this context, the question of governance becomes crucial. The concept of governance refers to the relationships and interdependencies between the collective actors. It focuses on how collective actors coordinate their activities to resolve common problems.

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When analysing main collective actors of dual VET systems, a key feature of most important examples of dual VET systems (Germany, Austria or Denmark) is the crucial role played by social partners (trade unions and employer organisations) in its governance. In contrast, some of the countries that are currently developing dual VET models evolve from VET systems which mainly rely on state regulation. As a result, the role played by social partners is less institutionalised and its degree of integration in the governance is comparatively low. In addition, in some cases reforms of dual VET systems have been approved in a context of deterioration of social dialogue and industrial democracy and, due to this, trade unions have remained sceptical or even critical with regard to dual VET systems.

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## Case selection and research objective

INVOLVE project focuses on four countries that have recently developed projects of dual systems of VET or are attempting to strength, reinforce or improve dual VET systems, and represent models of industrial relations where social partners play a comparatively low institutionalised role in policy making, namely Spain, Greece and Portugal ('State centred' model) and Poland ('Mixed' or 'Transitional' model).

The project has two main research objectives. First it aims to analyse the degree of social partners' integration and participation in the governance of dual VET systems. Second, it aims to develop national scenarios on how to establish integrative governance structures of dual VET systems.

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## Consortium

In order to analyse the 4 countries and develop scenarios to improve social partners' integration, the consortium involves 4 research centres (one per country included): Notus-asr -lead organisation- (Spain), CICS.NOVA of the University Nova of Lisbon (Portugal), the Institute of Public Affairs -IPA-

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(Poland) and the Labour Institute of the Union Confederation GSEE (Greece). These research centres have in-depth knowledge and longstanding expertise on the analysis of how social dialogue and collective bargaining is addressing the most relevant challenges in the world of work, including emerging skills needs, VET systems and the transition from school to work.

The project includes also social partners as associates: The Workers' Commissions -CCOO (Spain), the Teachers' Union -ZNP- (Poland) and the Association of Portuguese Metal, Metalworking and Engineering companies - AIMMAP-, (Portugal). In addition, the consortium includes an Advisory Board, composed by internationally recognised scientific experts on industrial relations and VET, which will provide scientific peer-review.

## Methodology

The methodology includes, first, desk research, aiming to provide a clear picture of the 'state of the art' for what concerns recent developments in dual VET systems in the involved countries.

Second, semi-structured interviews will be conducted at three different levels: macro level (peak level social partners and policy makers); meso level (regional and sectoral social partners,) micro level (employers and work councillors).

Third, participatory scenario methodology will be carried out with a view to developing national scenarios on how to establish integrative governance structures of dual VET systems. A minimum of two and a maximum of four scenarios about potential governance integrative structures improving social partners' involvement will be developed in each country. This exercise will entail the organisation of two national workshops in each country.

## Planning and next steps

INOLVE project has started in May 2020 and will last two years. Currently, the research team is conducting the desk research. Desk research findings will be discussed in the first scientific meetings which will be held virtually in November 2020.

In 2021, the research team will conduct the fieldwork and the participatory scenario methodology addressed to develop scenarios about potential governance integrative structures improving social partners' involvement in VET systems. In addition, a second scientific meeting will be held aiming to discuss fieldwork results.

During the first half of 2022, the project team will publish the final reports and will disseminate the project results through a final conference.



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