

# SUMMARY REPORT

Evaluation of the DECO project implemented activities – survey and round table discussions with employers for identification of key competences, necessary for VET schools graduates for their successful integration into the labour market



Project: DECO – Key competences for career designing in cooperation with labour market

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## 1. Introduction

The current report presents the summarized results of the research carried out in the period February - May 2015 in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Turkey, and Spain within the framework of the project Deco - Key competences for career designing in cooperation with labour market. The main objective of the research is to identify key competencies, which are necessary for the young labour force to successfully integrate into the European labour market.

The project creates partnership between 4 countries and 8 organizations, encompassing two sectors – vocational education schools and organizations, experienced in career counseling and designing, networking with labour market representatives cooperate in the project.

The **main project aim** is to identify key competences, necessary for the successful integration to the labour market of the VET schools students and prepare guidelines for VET schools career counselors for these key competences development.

**Activities** implemented during the project will help to reach these objects of the project:

- to foster career consultants of VET schools professional development;
- to provide better services for the VET students in key skill development for the successful integration into the labour market;
- to develop services for the labour market representatives in cooperation with the VET schools and expert organizations;
- to ensure the need of the labour market for the qualified work force.

Project activities are addressed to different **target groups** related to the project implementation stages. Labour market representatives are involved in the research for the key competences, necessary for the successful integration into the labour market identification. VET schools representatives - managers, practice teachers, career counselors are involved in preparation of good practices cases presentations for the key competences development at VET schools. Round table discussions involve labour



market representatives, stakeholders, VET education related authorities and representatives of the VET schools.

**Key competences** is a term, which has been used in the labour market sphere since 1974 and later finds its place as a major concept in the fields of education, training and personal development.

It is based on the fact that most of us have a satisfactory vocational development that we obtain during the process of training at school, which supports us in performing different tasks. Still in order to be successful we need something more than theoretical knowledge. This additional necessity is not offered fully by the system of education due to the fact that it is focused mainly on the acquisition of knowledge. At the same time we tend to ignore the fact that in order to use the knowledge obtained, we need to not only acquire it, but also to apply it in our professional and private life.

The concept of Key competencies includes all knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values that are essential to people if they want to succeed in society. Social and civil competencies, entrepreneurship, finding and managing information and life-long learning, also known as transversal skills, are part of the list of eight key competencies, which are vital for the society based on knowledge. /Lisbon Strategy, 2000; European Reference Framework of Key Competencies, 2004/.

It is the key competencies in particular, which make us successful in the current fast changing and unpredictable environment. They help us become part of a great number of networks, to be effective and independent in our jobs. Their benefits for us are much more lasting as compared to vocational qualifications and that is why they can be used as a basis for future learning. **Today there is no any doubt that key transferable skills are vital for the quality of future workforce and that these competences should start developing from school level. A large number of countries are introducing reforms that explicitly use the Key Competences framework as a reference point.**

Social competence includes a long list of skills: effective communication, cooperation, constructive problem-solving, proactive approach, efficiency, entrepreneurship, resilience to stress, self-sufficiency and independence, creativity, etc.



From the employers` point of view, it is the presence of certain social skills that give a certain competitive advantage of the professional realization of people.

The European economy and labour market further press on the need for developing education systems, so they can equip young people with transversal competences to ensure their adaptability and flexibility to the growing skills demand.

Moreover, social skills are not something to be learn within 5-10 days training programmes implemented by external psychologists, but require systematic approach and sustainable environment of mutual trust.

**This report summarizes the results from the research and the discussions with employers, carried out in all four countries, participating in the project. It also identifies the point of intersection of results, which consists of the key competencies that are essential to the business sector that vocational schools develop in young people.**

## 2. Background

**The economic crisis that started in the second half of the last decade has created a particularly** fragile situation for today's young generation. As youth unemployment is one of the leading challenges the Member States are facing today it is important to give young people access to training that is relevant to the needs of the labour market, establish links with businesses and find effective routes into employment.

The project idea addresses the need to improve competitiveness of young people along with optimizing training and making it more attuned to the needs of the business environment. This makes research among employers key for the realization of our goals. The list of competencies, which are to be investigated by the research, reflects the horizontal priorities of the Erasmus + program for developing transversal skills (such as entrepreneurship, digital skills and language competences) in all fields of education, training and youth.



Partner organizations have a previous experience in the field on the basis of successfully realized projects as well as the wide network of contacts of SME's, schools, education and business associations, regional authorities and stakeholders created over the years, which assures that awareness about entrepreneurship possibilities will be recognized as the key competence for the successful integration into the labor market. By integrating the capacity of organizations from different countries and fields we expect to achieve a synergy effect on the end product.

The starting points of the application are the results from the Improvement of the Vocational Education for the Labor Market Needs Project, funded by Latvia - Lithuania program. Research to identify the quality of VET for the student's successful integration in to the labor market was implemented (2013), more than 350 employers, principals, students and practice teachers were surveyed. Lack of the general key competences, hindering successful employment of VET students and ensuring labor market needs was identified. The need to prepare guidance for career counselors in order to help them in developing VET schools student's key competences in cooperation with labor market representatives was stated during the research.

Project partners from Lithuania agreed that sharing of the best practice of different EU countries would help to prepare qualified career counselors guidelines for the VET students key skill development at VET schools. The model of cooperation between VET school and expert in career designing, networking with employer's organization in the same country was chosen to reach planned project results and outputs.

Tarsus Chamber of Commerce and Industry /TTSO/ works very close to the business. The Chamber is committed to providing quality services and creating opportunities for success for its member businesses. To achieve this, it focuses on networking businesses through our member base, providing training member businesses, providing opportunities for business member discounts, and striving to create new and innovative initiatives to revitalize and benefit both the businesses and community residents of Tarsus.



National Management School /NMS/ is specialized in trainings for development of transversal competences. As a Vocational Education Provider (VET centre) it ensures constant and close links with employers and strategic understanding of the emerging labour market needs, which is an additional guarantee that the youth trainings in transversal competences are tuned to the world of work.

In the period 2010 – 2013, NMS coordinated three projects, relevant to the content of current proposal, as follows: Two Comenius Multilateral projects, SOS.NET (SOcial Skills Trainer - New Qualification for European Teachers, <http://sostrainer.nbschool.eu>) and CoMeIn (Coaching Methodology for Teachers in Secondary Schools, <http://comein.nbschool.eu>), and European Social Fund project “Key competences for more competitive labour force in Bulgaria”, <http://competencies.nbschool.eu>.

Método Consultores is an international consulting firm for advanced services in training, social-labour research and design and implementation of co-operational projects using new technologies to provide innovative solutions that optimize our clients’ resources. It has more than 14 years of experience developing comprehensive training projects aimed at maximizing the productivity of both companies and people. Método Consultores hold the “Management System Certificate” of the company DNV Business Assurance. This organization certifies with the standard ISO 9001:2008.

The four VET schools are actively involved in the vocational preparation of students and are familiar with their needs and motivation. At the same time their work is carried out in close cooperation with public institutions and the business sector. They also have experience with international projects for the exchange of good practices and the optimization of training in relation to the requirements of the labour market.

### 3. Methodology

In order to carry out an investigation into the needs of employers of a prepared labour force, i.e. to identify key competencies that young people need to find a more successful realization on the labour market, two independent approaches have been used in all four countries, which participate in the project:

- A/ an online research with a questionnaire
- B/ round table discussions with employers.

The argument in favor of this approach is that by collecting data from two independent channels, which is to be compared and analyzed, more reliable end results will be achieved.

A/ The online survey process has undergone the following main stages:

1. *Preparation of questionnaire*
2. *Translation*
3. *Choosing appropriate software*
4. *Data gathering*
5. *Data processing*
6. *Analyzing*
7. *Final conclusions*

The first action taken, along with the rest of the partners involved in A1 activity, was the preparation of the questionnaire, which was developed in the months of February and March 2015. The preparation of the questionnaire started during the kick-off meeting in Lithuania. As a result of the online communication that followed finally partners decided to use a questionnaire with the following structure:

Areas of research:

1.	<i>Companies Identification</i>
2.	<i>Recruitment and workforce structure</i>
3.	<i>Recruitment difficulties</i>
4.	<i>Competence assessment</i>
5.	<i>Assessment of the adequacy of vocational training programmes to the labour market</i>

Items to be identified (questions):

1.	<i>Country</i>
2.	<i>Economic sector</i>
3.	<i>Territorial scope</i>
4.	<i>Company age</i>
5.	<i>Average number of employees</i>
6.	<i>Age structure of the workforce</i>
7.	<i>Qualification level of the workforce</i>
8.	<i>Have you hired new employees in the previous year?</i>
9.	<i>Considering previous year's recruitments, could you indicate what percentage of them were young people (under29)?</i>
10.	<i>Have you encountered problems / difficulties when performing the staff selection or recruitment process of a young professional?</i>
11.	<i>Which of the following aspects do you consider as the main difficulties for the recruitment of young professionals? Indicate the three most important ones (only three).</i>
12.	<i>From the following professional categories, could you indicate if you have had difficulties in finding young professionals suitable to the required needs of your company?</i>
13.	<i>The following table contains a set of PROFESSIONAL and PERSONAL competences. As an employer, rate on a scale from 1 (less important) to 4 (the most important) the competences provided below.</i>
14.	<i>How do you assess the preparation of young people when finishing their studies and enter the labour market. Please, describe the missing parts of their preparation.</i>
15.	<i>In your case, do you think your young workers need to be retrained for a better job performance?</i>
16.	<i>What kind of competences vocational training must develop?</i>

The same questionnaire was used in all countries participating in the project. The questionnaire were *translated* to the national languages /BG, LT, TR, ES/.

Then, it was discussed the *software* to be used for throwing the questionnaires to the respective employers and get the results. After some tests and discussions, **Survey Monkey** tool was chosen as the software on which all partners involved in the activity had to work with. Método Consultores created an account in such software and provided the data of the account to the rest of the partners, as well as some general guidelines about how to deal with the different aspects related to the use of such tool.

Expert Partners organizations (Panevėžys business advisory centre, Tarsus Ticaret ve Sanayi Odasi, National Management School and Método Estudios Consultores) prepared

the survey for employers */gathering data/*. They used several **contact databases** that they have from other previous projects and researches conducted in the past, all of them related to employers that had worked in programmes of **job insertion for young people** and other employers that have hired young people. According to the project proposal at least 50 respondents had to answer the questionnaire.

After completing the questionnaires each consulting company *processed the gathered data* and prepared a summary of the received results, which were presented during second partner meeting in Sofia.

The research events took place during the period April - May, 2015. We faced some problems when developing the different phases of the research. However, all of them were properly solved on time and the progress of the actions was not in danger.

The main difficulties met:

- **Considerable lack of cooperation by employers.** Less than 10% of the questionnaires disseminated had a response.
- **Questionnaires not properly filled.** Some of the responded questionnaires did not have all the sections covered, so they were not valid.

B/ The second approach to collect information about employer's needs of key competences of employees were round table discussion. Each participating VET institution (Viešoji įstaiga Panevėžio profesinio rengimo centras, Centro Integrado Público de Formación Profesional Misericordia, Profesionalna gimnazia po podemna, stroitelna i transportna tehnika "G. S. Rakovski" and Yeşilköy Emin Kasapoğlu Çok Programlı Lisesi (1 from each project country) organized round table discussions with the employers in their native country.

One of the main objectives of this approach was to identify the abilities, skills and key competences demanded to workers by the companies, which are common among the different European countries, so that Vocational Education and Training (VET) students can face their compulsory training period with higher guarantees of success.

For the achievement of an effective and real identification of the key competences, collaboration with employers is essential. It is because of that this round table has been attended by representatives of companies which receive students during their traineeship period. Their viewpoint was very relevant to reach the above mentioned purpose.

The selection of the different enterprises and governmental institutions was made taking into account that:

- They are competent, renowned and recognized companies in their fields.
- They collaborate with VET centres on a regular basis.
- They belong to the different professional fields studied in VET schools, so as we can assure richer and more versatile conclusions, and are directly related to students education.

At least 40 representatives of labour market from the countries had to participate in round table discussion. It was preferable that the companies which have employed pupils from vocational schools should participate in the events. All VET institutions prepared good practices of teaching key competences at their schools/centers and similar organizations involvement of labour market representatives into these activities and the issues that needs to be improved.

## **4. Presentation of Research Results**

### **4.1. Survey**

#### **4.1.1. Bulgaria**

60 respondents from 14 economic sectors have taken part in the research.

The most well represented is the **Construction sector /20%/**.

Forty-three percent of organizations are national and 28% are international.

Sixty-three percent have a history of more than 10 years /47% - more than 20/.

Forty-two percent have a staff of more than 10 people and 33% - more than 50.

Only 33% of staff are below the age of 29.

Seventy-two percent are qualified staff.

Sixty-two percent of the participants have hired new staff during the last year, half of which are young people.

Ninety-four percent of participants commented that they have experienced difficulties with recruitment.

Some of the most common hindrances include: **expectations for higher remuneration, lack of key competencies and adequate labour market experience.**

The most problems occur when selecting young people with relation to the **highly qualified staff and middle level managers.**

According to Bulgarian employers **the most important** key competencies of their staff are: **cooperation, efficiency, resilience to stress and problem solving.**

Answer Options	Rating Average
Effective communication	2.96
Team working	3.45
Entrepreneurship	2.96
Problem solving	3.19
Stress resiliency	3.26
Independency	2.57
Foreign languages	2.66
Proactive approach	2.66
Digital competences	2.87
Efficiency	3.40

According to the results young people lack preparation of different extent in all competencies, which are represented, but the most evident need is in relation to: **cooperation, effective communication, problem solving and entrepreneurship.**

A hundred percent of participants think that in order to achieve better realization, young employees need additional training.

About 70% of the respondents are of the opinion that vocational training and education should integrate curricula for the development of key competencies and the ones with the greatest importance are: skills related to **working in a team, problem solving, stress resiliency, and efficiency.**

### 4.1.2. Lithuania

Fifty-five respondents from 13 economic sectors have taken part in the research.

The most well represented sectors include: **Wholesale and retail sale /20%/**, Manufacturing /13%/, Arts, entertainment and recreation /11 %/ and other services /14.5%/.

Thirty-six percent are regional and 31% are local organizations.

Sixty-six percent have a history longer than 5 years /51% - more than 10/

Thirty-three percent have a staff of less than 10 people and 31% - between 11 and 20.

Only 37% of staff is younger than 29 years.

Seventy-eight percent have qualified staff.

Seventy-one percent of participants have hired new staff during the past year, out of which 70% are young people. Fifty percent of the respondents have had some difficulties related to recruitment.

The main and most common difficulties include: **expectations for high social gains and remuneration, lack of social competencies, qualification and experience.**

The greatest problems when recruiting young people are related to **operators, customer services staff and administrative staff job positions.**

For the employers **the most important** key competencies of their staff include: **efficiency, problem solving, cooperation, independency, stress resiliency.**

Answer Options	Rating Average
Effective communication	3.38
Team working	3.58
Entrepreneurship	2.95
Problem solving	3.73
Stress resiliency	3.44
Independency	3.56
Foreign languages	3.22
Proactive approach	3.18
Digital competences	3.42
Efficiency	3.80

According to 50% of respondents there is a lack of preparation at a different extent in all competencies, but the most evident necessity is observed in relation to: **cooperation, problem solving and efficiency.**

Forty-six of the participants think that in order to achieve better realization young employees need additional training.

About 70% of the respondents share the opinion that vocational education and training should include curricula for the development of key competencies and the most important ones are: **cooperation, problem solving, proactive approach, stress resiliency, effective communication, and digital competences.**

#### *4.1.3. Turkey*

Fifty-four respondents from 14 economic sectors have taken part in the research.

The most represented sectors with 13% presence include: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Financial and insurance activities; Professional, scientific and technical activities.

Thirty-five percent are local and 29% are regional organizations.

Fifty-five percent have a history of between 5 and 20 years.

Sixty-seven percent have a staff of up to 10 people. Forty percent of staff is younger than 29 years of age.

Fifty-nine percent are qualified staff.

Sixty-one percent of participants have hired new staff during the past year out of which 2/3 are young people.

Sixty-three percent comment that they have had certain difficulties related to the recruitment of staff.

The main and most common difficulties are: **expectations for high remuneration, lack of professional experience and motivation.**

The greatest problems related to the recruitment of young people as **administrative staff, technical support and experts.**

According to Turkish employers **the most important** key competencies of their employees include: **cooperation, effective communication, efficiency, digital competencies, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, proactive approach.**

Answer Options	Rating Average
Effective communication	3.35
Team working	3.48
Entrepreneurship	3.15
Problem solving	3.19
Stress resiliency	2.96
Independency	2.96
Foreign languages	2.66
Proactive approach	3.02
Digital competences	3.24
Efficiency	3.33

According to respondents there is a lack of preparation to varying degrees in seven competencies, where the most evident need is related to: **effective communication, digital competencies and efficiency.**

Ninety-eight percent of participants claim that in order to achieve better realization young employees need additional training.

About 80% of respondents think that vocational education and training should include curricula for the development of key competencies, where the most important ones include: **effective communication, team working skills, problem-solving, digital competencies and efficiency.**

#### ***4.1.4. Spain***

A total of 50 respondents and 16 economic sectors have taken part in the research.

The most well represented sectors are: **Wholesale and retail trade /18%/, Agriculture, forestry and fishing /16%/, Manufacturing /16%/, Hospitality/14%/.**

Forty-four organizations are national, 22% - local and 22% - international.

Seventy-eight percent have a history of more than 10 years and none of the organizations have a history of less than 2 years.

Thirty-four percent have a staff of more than 50 people and 48% of up to 20.

22 % of staff is younger than 29 years of age.

Sixty-six percent are qualified employees.

Ninety-two percent of the participants have hired new staff during the last year.

Thirty-seven percent of the newly hired are young people.

Thirty-six percent of the participants comment that they have had difficulties with recruitment.

The most common difficulties include: **lack of relevant work experience, lack of some of the key skills for job performance, low motivation for working, expectations of high salaries, lack of relevant qualifications.**

The most problems occur with the recruitment of young people for **middle management, technical support and expert jobs.**

According to Spanish employers **the most important key competencies** of their employees include: **teamwork capacity, problem solving capacity, efficiency, effective communication and proactive capacity.**

Answer Options	Rating Average
Effective communication	3.45
Team working	3.68
Entrepreneurship	3.14
Problem solving	3.62
Stress resiliency	3.08
Independency	3.06
Foreign languages	2.84
Proactive approach	3.26
Digital competences	3.10
Efficiency	3.50

According to the respondents there is a lack of preparation to a varying degree in seven of the competencies and this is evident in relation to: **proactive capacity, efficiency and problem solving capacity.**

Seventy-eight percent of the participants think that in order to achieve better realization young people need additional training.

About 90% of respondents share the opinion that vocational education and training should integrate curricula for the development of key competencies where the most important ones include: **problem-solving capacity, teamwork capacity, efficiency, effective communication.**

#### 4.1.5. Summary

The research has taken place during the period April - May 2015 on the territory of the counties participating in the project. A total of 219 valid questionnaires have been received, which exceeds by 9,5 % the set minimum of the sample consisting of 200 participants /50 participants from each county/. The distribution among the countries is as follows: Bulgaria - 60 p. , Spain – 50 p. , Turkey - 54 p. , Lithuania - 55 p.

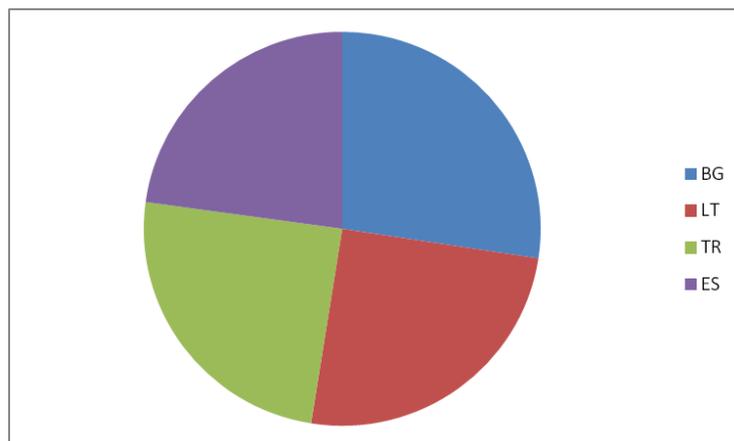


CHART Nr.1. Distribution of respondents by country

In order to identify the economic sector of the companies, the participants were presented with the following list of 21 items (NACE):

A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing
B	Mining and quarrying
C	Manufacturing
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
E	Water supply; sewerage; waste management and remediation activities
F	Construction
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
H	Transporting and storage
I	Accommodation and food service activities
J	Information and communication
K	Financial and insurance activities
L	Real estate activities
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities
N	Administrative and support service activities
O	Public administration and defense; compulsory social security
P	Education
Q	Human health and social work activities
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation
S	Other services activities
T	Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods - and services - producing activities of households for own use
U	Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies

Although there is certain disproportion of countries, sectors, which are the most represented in the survey are:

- Other services activities - **15%**
- Construction - **11%**
- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles - **11%**
- Manufacturing - **10%**
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing - **7.5%**
- Accommodation and food service activities - **6,5%**
- Financial and insurance activities - **6%**
- Professional, scientific and technical activities - **6%**

Four of economical sectors are not represented in the survey: Mining and quarrying , Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Education, Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods - and services - producing activities of households for own use.

The other 5 sectors are represented fewer than 3%: Water supply; sewerage; waste management and remediation activities, Real estate activities, Administrative and support service activities, Education, Human health and social work activities.

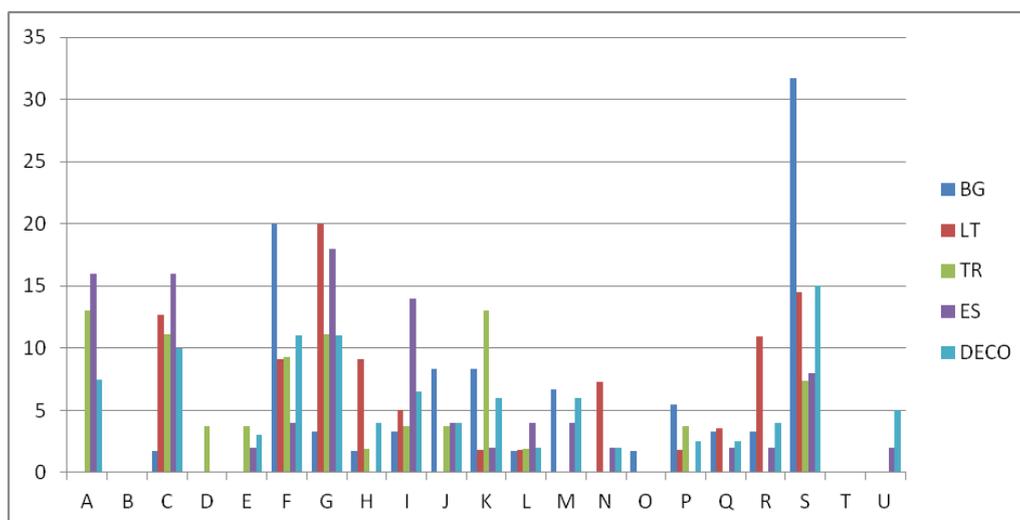


CHART Nr. 2. Distribution of respondents by economic sectors

Companies with a different coverage have taken part in the survey; still data shows comparatively equal distribution: Local - **25%**, Regional - **24%**, National - **30%**, International - **21%**. For Lithuania and Turkey companies with local and regional coverage prevail /LT - 67%, TR - 65%/ and for Bulgaria and Spain - with national and international coverage /BG - 72%, ES - 66%/.

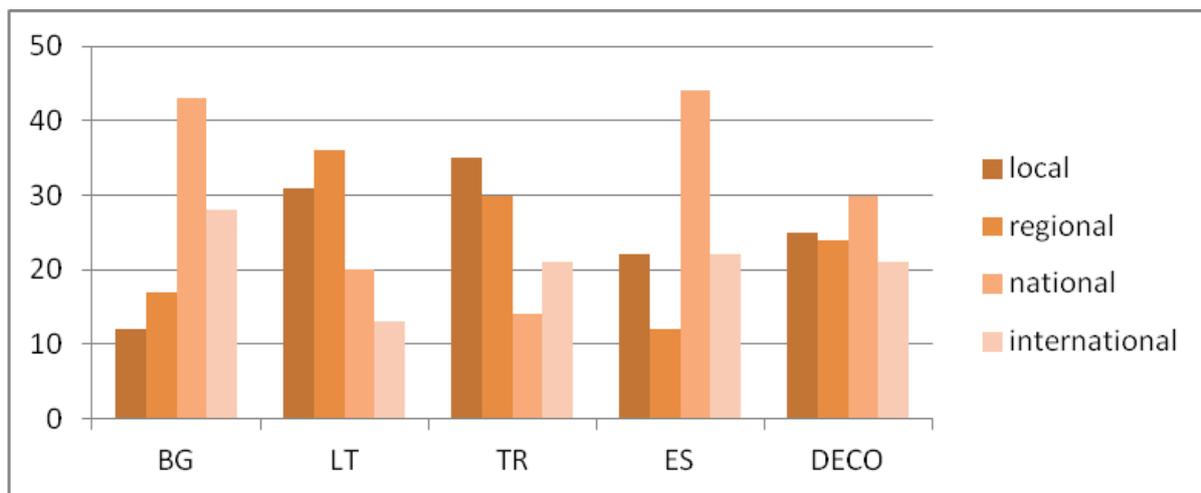


CHART Nr.3. Territorial scope of the companies

The prevailing part of the companies have a **history of more than 10 years /56%/**. Thirty percent of them have an experience of more than 20 years and for Bulgaria and Spain this share is three times bigger as compared to Lithuania and Turkey where most of the companies have a history of 2 to 20 years. There are no “young” companies from Spain with experience of up to 2 years and for Bulgaria they are only 5%.

In other words the research has data from employers who have experience even before the start of the global economic crisis and after that. They are familiar with the dynamics of the labour market and obviously have been able to adapt to the new conditions and keep searching for ways to improve their competitiveness effectiveness of the human factor.

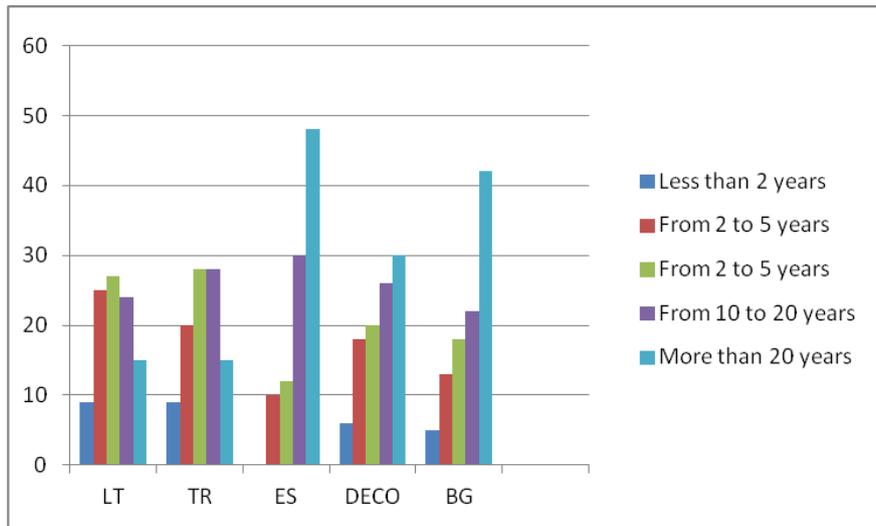


CHART Nr.4. Company age

Sixty percent of the participants are companies with a staff of under 20 and 40% have less than 10 employees. These companies have the greatest representation in all the countries. In other words, the main part of the sample are **small and medium enterprises**. Twenty-four percent are companies with a staff of more than 50 people, but we also have bear in mind the fact that there is a disproportion of some kind between the countries. These enterprises have grown twice as much in Bulgaria and Spain as compared to Lithuania and Turkey.

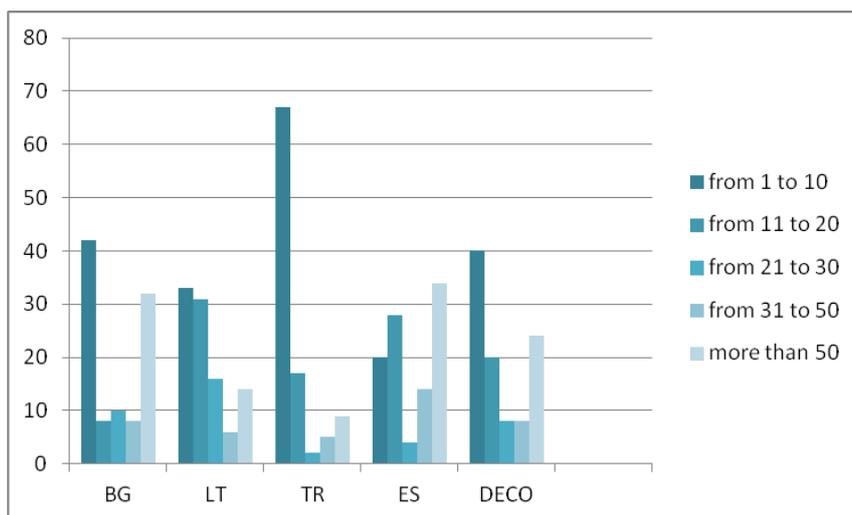


CHART Nr.5. Average number of employees in the last year

The ratio between employed young people /**under 29**/ - **33%** and the rest /older than 29/ - **67%** is two to one in favour of the second group. This disproportion can be seen in

all countries but it is more apparent in Spain /only 22 % are young/ and not so drastic in Turkey /40% are younger than 29 and 60% - older than 29%/.

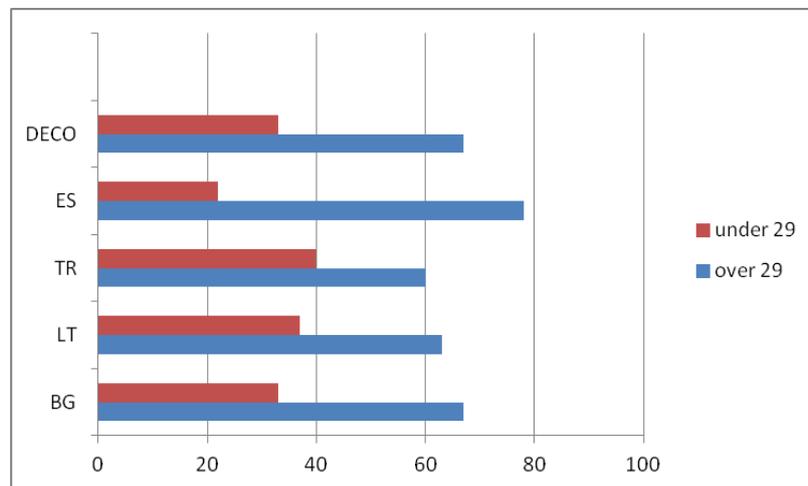


CHART Nr.6. Age structure of the work force

The same ratio between qualified /66%/ and unqualified staff /34%/ can be seen where the first griup is prevailing. The trend is the most evident in Bulgaria /72%/ and Lithuania /78%/. The ratio is to a certain extent more balanced in Turkey /59% are qualified and 41% are unqualified staff/.

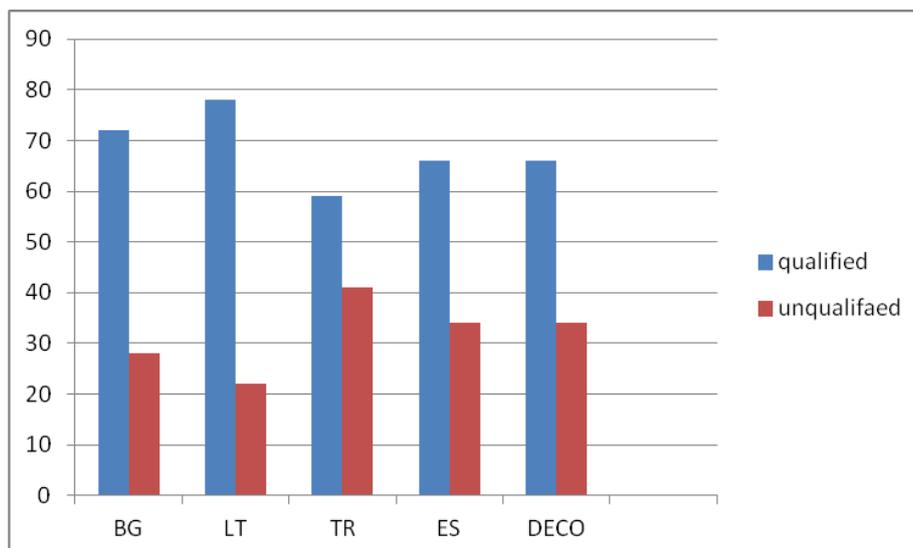


CHART Nr.7. Qualification level of the work force

Seventy-three percent of the respondents have hired staff during the past year. This process is more evident in Spain, while in Turkey there is a weaker, but still high trend /61%/.

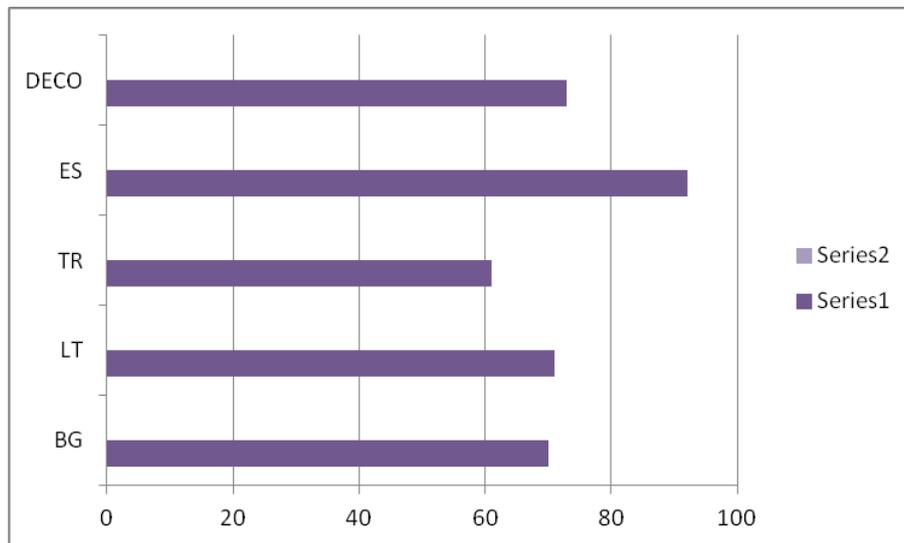


CHART Nr.8. Hired staff during the past year

The ratio among the newly employed between people below and over 29 is in favour of the second group. This proves without any doubt that **employers prefer more experienced staff /61%/**, which can be expected. It also goes to show that effective measures are needed in order to improve the preparation of young people, so that they are more competitive on the labour market.

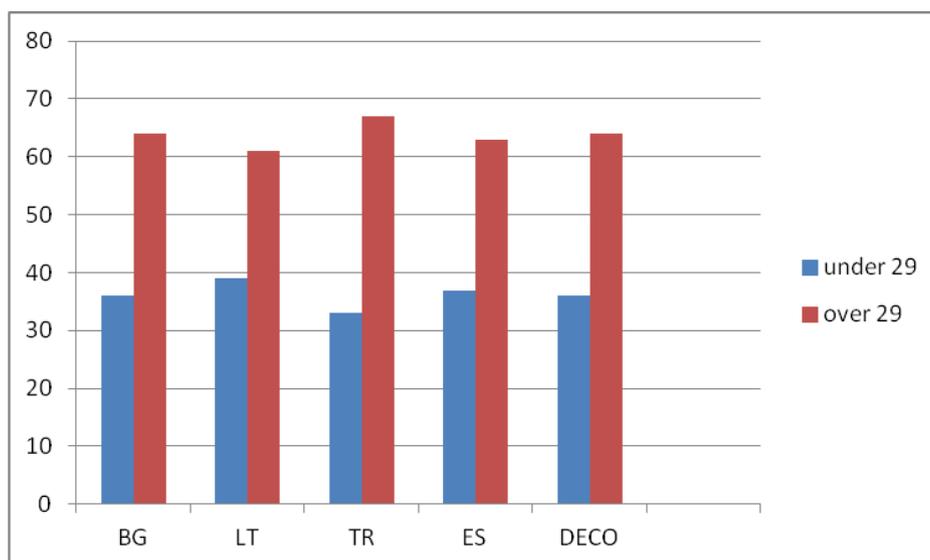


CHART Nr.9. Age structure of the recruitments in last 12 months

Sixty percent of the participants in the survey admitted having faced difficulties of different origin during the selection of young staff. This is more evident in holds Bulgaria /94%/, and the least observed in Spain /36%/.

In the list containing ten of the most common hindrances in finding the right specialists, the ones which have the greatest importance are:

- High expectations of social benefits
- Competition from other employers
- Lack of some of the key competencies for job performance
- Lack of job applicants in the labour market
- Lack of relevant qualifications
- Company localitation
- Low motivation for working

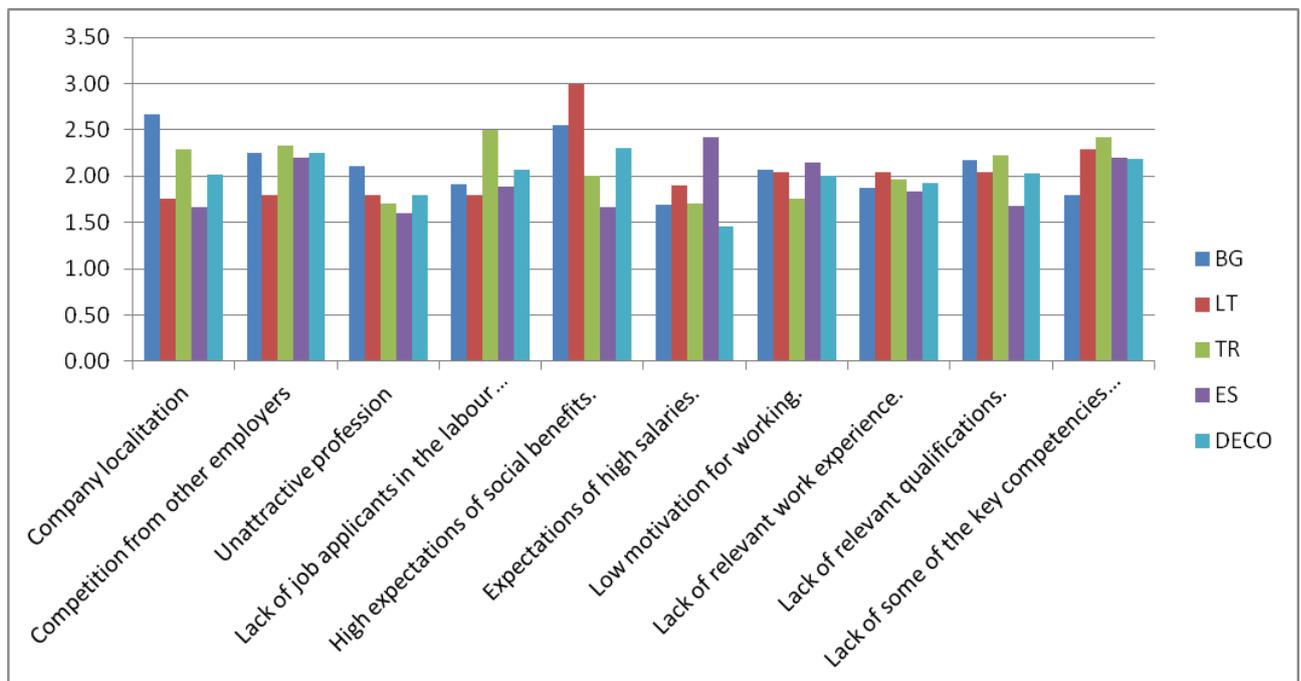


CHART Nr.10. Difficulties for the recruitment of young professionals

The most common problems are related to finding the right candidates for expert positions /68%/ and middle management /56%/. This holds true for all countries, but in addition it could be said that in Lithuania, the greatest difficulties are faced when

looking for young management staff (administrative or financial), and for Turkey this is valid for customer service staff and operators, and for operators in Bulgaria as well.

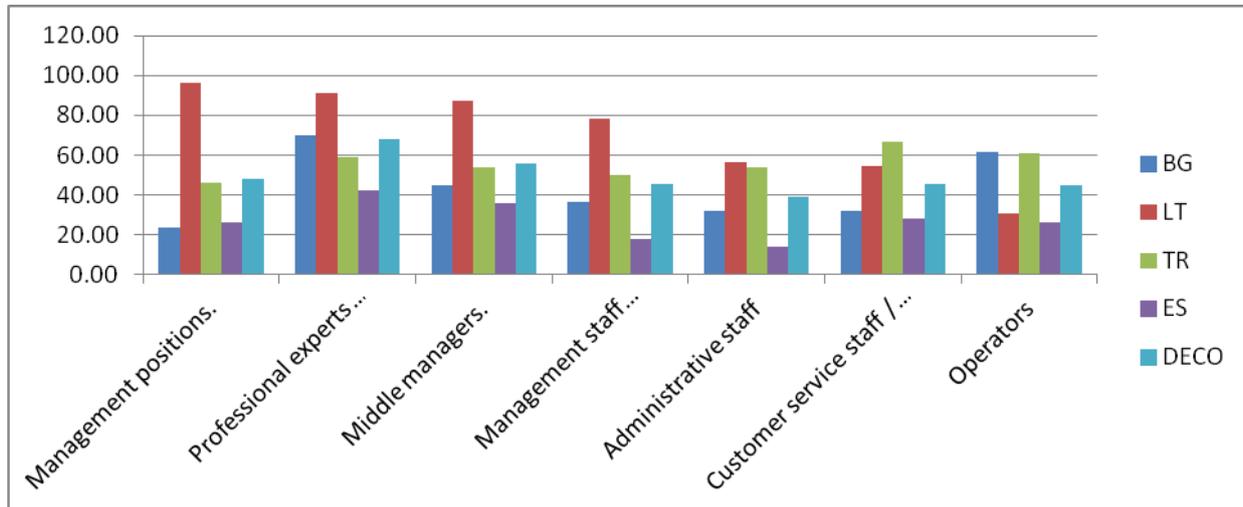


CHART Nr.11. Difficulties when recruiting suitable young professional according to job position

Participants consider all ten key competencies in the list to be important for the realization of young people. Depending on their importance the assessments are ranked in the following way:

1. Cooperation (team working)
2. Problem solving (concentration and understanding of real reasons, participants and solutions)
3. Efficiency (concentration, planning, diligence, orientation towards results)
4. Effective Communication (active listening, asking questions, empathy)
5. Stress resiliency (self-knowledge, self-control, stress management)
6. Digital competencies (IT and use of office equipment)
7. Independence (self-confidence, self-management, cooperation)
8. Entrepreneurship (vision of new ideas and opportunities, risk management, flexibility)
9. Proactive approach (creativity, innovation, activity)
10. Foreign languages

Answer Options	Rating Average BG	Rating Average LT	Rating Average TR	Rating Average ES	Rating Average DECO	Rank
Effective communication	2.96	3.38	3.35	3.45	3,26	4
Team working	3.45	3.58	3.48	3.68	3,55	1
Entrepreneurship	2.96	2.95	3.15	3.14	3,05	8
Problem solving	3.19	3.73	3.19	3.62	3,51	2
Stress resiliency	3.26	3.44	2.96	3.08	3,18	5
Independency	2.57	3.56	2.96	3.06	3,04	7
Foreign languages	2.66	3.22	2.66	2.84	2,84	10
Proactive approach	2.66	3.18	3.02	3.26	3,03	9
Digital competences	2.87	3.42	3.24	3.10	3,13	6
Efficiency	3.40	3.80	3.33	3.50	3,50	3

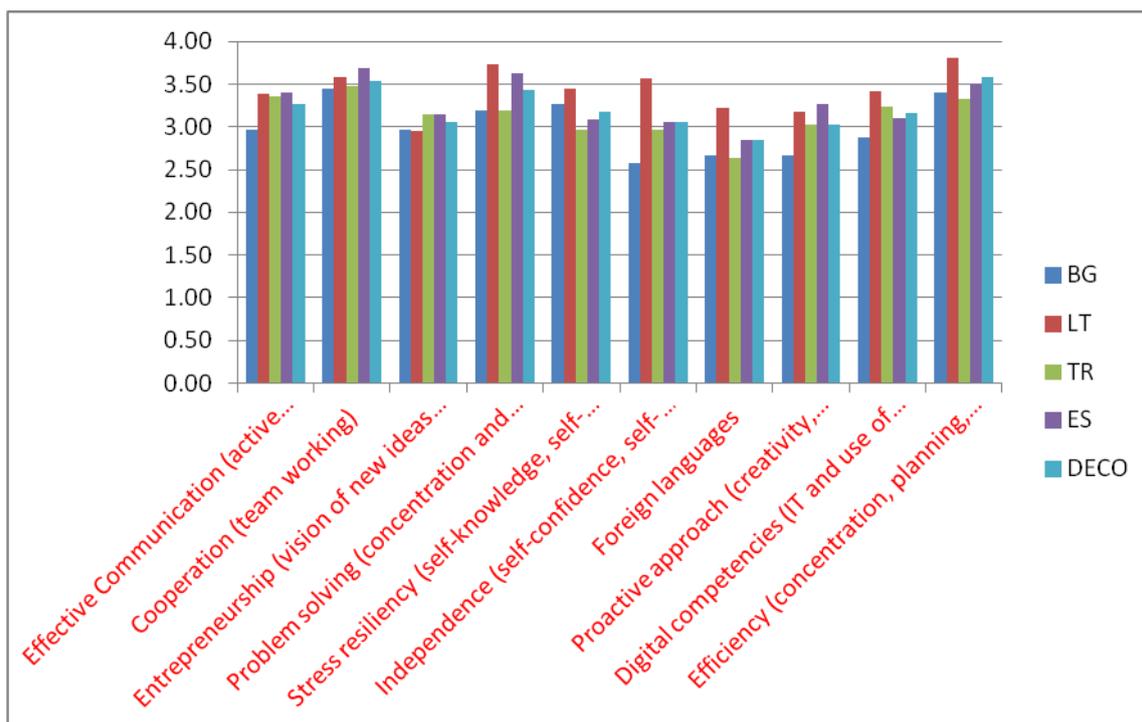


CHART Nr.12. Assessment of the importance of the professional and personal skills

According to the participants vocational training today sufficiently lacks training in the skills of Efficiency (concentration, planning, diligence, orientation towards results), Cooperation (team working), Effective Communication (active listening, asking questions, empathy) and Problem solving (concentration and understanding of real reasons, participants and solutions)

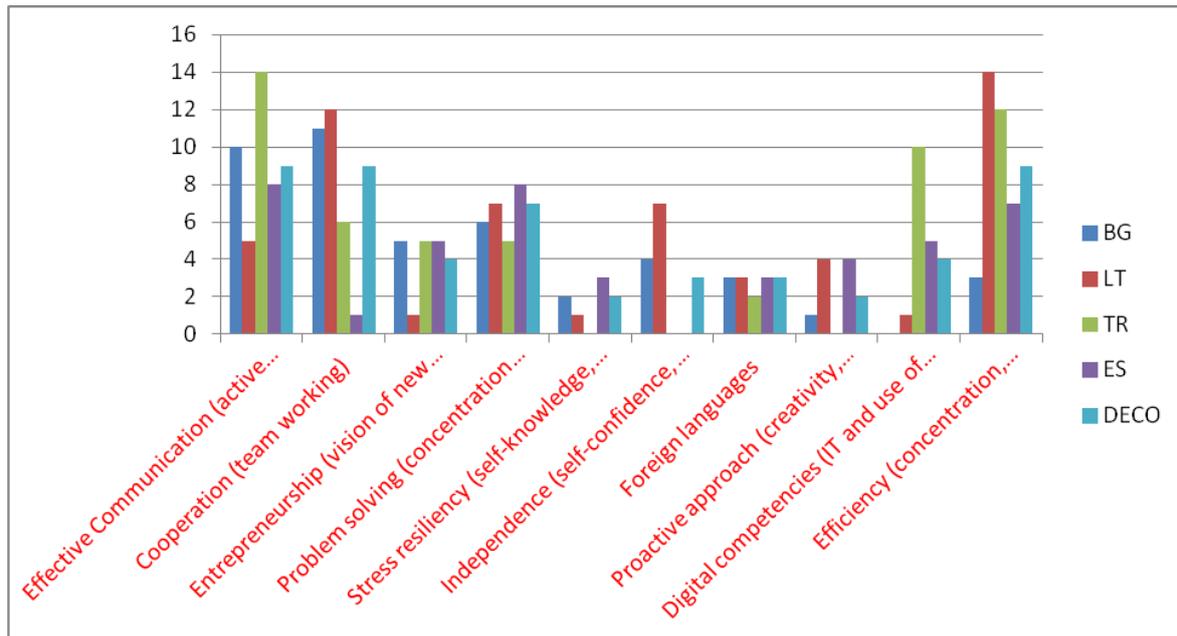


CHART Nr.13. Estimation of the competencies not presented in the training of young professionals

In addition to that they also think that the competencies, whose development should be central to the vocational preparation, are:

- Cooperation (team working)
- Problem solving (concentration and understanding of real reasons, participants and solutions)
- Digital competencies (IT and use of office equipment)
- Effective Communication (active listening, asking questions, empathy)
- Efficiency (concentration, planning, diligence, orientation towards results)

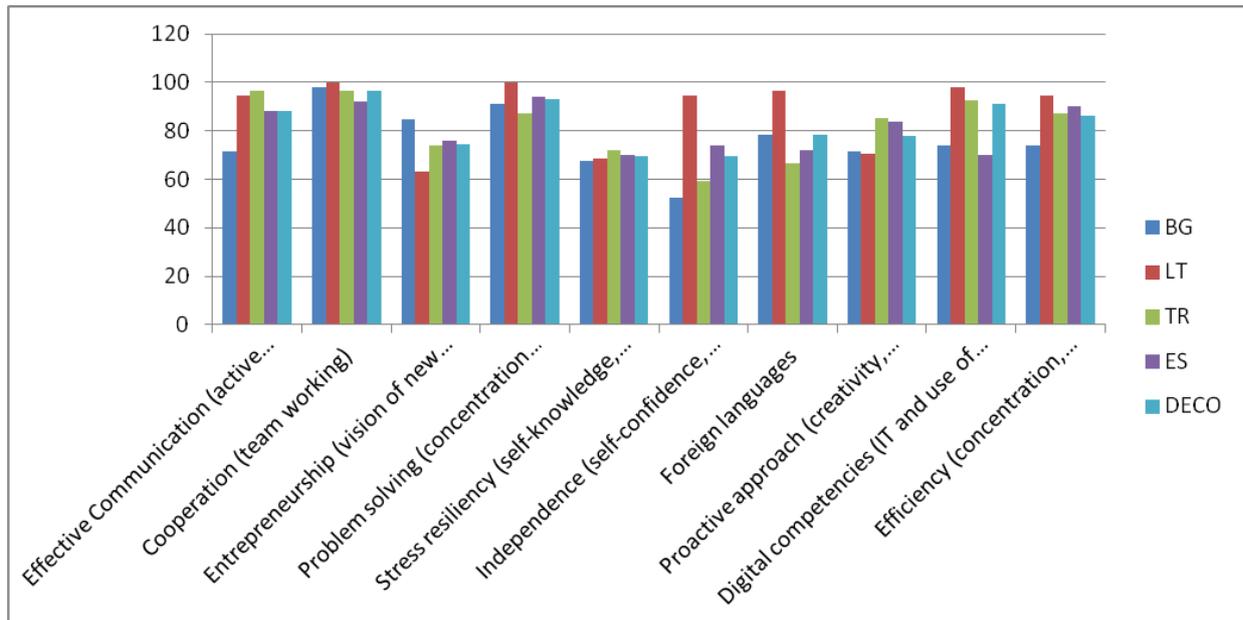


CHART Nr.14. Estimation of the skills that must be developed by training programmes

#### 4.1.6. Main Conclusions

The research is not representative, but the results give grounds for detecting certain trends with regard to the set goals.

Companies from 8 sectors are present and the domineering ones are: Construction - **11%**, Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles - **11%**, Manufacturing - **10%**, Agriculture, forestry and fishing - **7.5%**

A third of those are national. Half of them have a more than ten-year old history. Seventy-six percent of participants are small and medium sized companies with a number of staff lower than 50. Young workers /below the age of 29/ are two times less than the rest /above the age of 29/ including the selection from last year. **Sixty-six percent are high qualification level workers.**

Sixty percent of the participants in the research have had certain problems with the recruitment of young people. Most important **potential barriers**: High expectations of social benefits, Competition from other employers, Lack of some of the key competencies for job performance, Lack of job applicants in the labour market, Lack of relevant qualifications, Company location, Low motivation for working. **Problems with the selection are usual with highly qualified professional experts and middle**

**managers**, but there are also certain differences related to the country of origin, which should also be taken into account when drafting the guide.

According to them the most important competencies for professional realization include: **Efficiency, Cooperation, Problem solving, Effective Communication, Stress resiliency, Digital competencies.**

Skills with the smallest presence in the training (the most needed ones) are: **Efficiency, Cooperation (team working), Effective communication and Problem solving.**

Eighty-one percent of the companies indicated that **young workers in their staff should be retrained to improve their work performance** especially in **Cooperation, Problem solving, Digital competencies, Effective Communication, Efficiency.**

#### ***4.2. Round tables: “Vocational education and training according to the labour market needs”***

One of the main objectives of this initiative is to identify the abilities, skills and key competences demanded to workers by the companies, which are common among the different European countries, so that Vocational Education and Training (VET) students can face their compulsory training period with higher guarantees of success.

There is no doubt it is possible only during a collaboration with employers would.

##### ***4.2.1. Bulgaria***

The round table took place on 30 March 2015 in Pleven. The discussion was attended by 10 employers from building construction and transport sectors, included companies, taking part in final qualification exams and also providing vocational education and training to students.

Participants which were companies working on regional, national or international level have different number of employees – from about 10 to 150.

During the discussions the employers indicated that the main difficulties and problems are as follows:

### ***Building construction sector***

- Lack of motivation
- Ability to work in a team and individually
- Responsibility
- Lack of relevant qualification

### ***Transport sector***

- Lack of motivation
- Expectation of high salaries
- Foreign languages skills
- Ability to work in a team and individually
- Lack of job applicants in the labour market
- Lack of relevant qualification

#### ***4.2.2. Lithuania***

The round table took place on 23-03-2015 in Panevėžys, Lithuania. The discussion was attended by 11 employers (mainly directors or owners) from the sectors which Viešoji įstaiga Panevėžio profesinio rengimo centras has close cooperation with (construction, agriculture, beauty services, car repairing and sales), representative of the sectorial association (beauty association) and participats in qualification exams.

Participants which were companies working on regional, national or international level have different number of employees – from about 2 to 200.

During the discussions the employers indicated that the main difficulties and problems are as follow:

#### ***Beauty sector:***

- Lack of motivation
- Basics of economical calculations



- Ability to work in a team and individually
- Social and communicational skills
- Professional ethics
- Creativity
- Desire to work and improve professional skills
- Not to be afraid to start from simple works

***Construction:***

- Lack of motivation
- Ability to work in a team and individually
- Has no future prospects
- Accuracy and attention
- Indifferent attitude to work
- Foreign language skills
- Responsibility
- Physical strength
- Conflict management

***Agriculture:***

- Lack of motivation
- Responsibility
- Social and communicational skills
- Indifferent attitude to work
- Physical strength

***Mechanics, mechatronics:***

- Lack of motivation
- Responsibility

- Social and communicational skills
- Lack of purpose
- Self-support
- Timidity
- Desire to improve professional skills

#### *4.2.3. Turkey*

The round table was organised on 30 March in Yeşilköy, Turkey. The discussion was attended by 10 representatives of companies from the following sectors: tourism, agriculture, education and industry. These companies are mostly local which have employees between the number of 5 and 50 and also where our graduate students do their internship.

The basic problems or difficulties that employers mostly face are;

- Lack of Motivation For Working
- Lack of Some of The Key Competencies For Job
- Expectations of High Salaries
- Lack of Relevant Qualifications
- Location of The Company
- Unattractive Profession

The importance of the competences was also discussed and participants especially from tourism sector and agriculture for those who export goods indicated the major competencies should be improved as because they mostly encounter when they select the young professionals. The competencies are:

- Foreign Language Skills
- Effective Communication
- Ability to Work In a group and individually
- Independence
- Problem Solving
- Digital Competencies

#### ***4.2.4. Spain***

The round table was organised on 21.04.2015 in Valencia, Spain. The discussion was attended by 12 representatives of companies from the following sectors: electronics, social services, new technologies and renewable energies, gourmet industries. Representatives of the Association of Topography Engineers of Valencia participated in the discussions also.

Participating companies are working on regional, national or international level and have different number of employees – from about 50 to more than 500.

Participants didn't meet any difficulties with selection of personnel due to the high unemployment rate.

According to the participants, the most important competencies that should be developed in vocational education are:

- Creativity
- Initiative
- Teamwork capacity
- Humility and integrity
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills

Another important aspect of the quality of professional training has been identified during the discussion – many trainees do not realize that they are not at school any more, and that therefore they should proceed accordingly to this new working environment. As a result, they are reluctant or they find it difficult to make decisions, to provide solutions or to have a proactive attitude, because they still think they are under the protection that the educational system gives them.

#### ***4.2.5. Summary***

Four round table discussions were conducted in March and April 2015 in the participating countries. They were attended by a total of 43 representatives of

employers from 12 economic sectors and companies with a staff of 5 to 200 people. The participants were mostly from SME companies with regional and local coverage.

The main aims of the meeting were:

- To establish those competences, skills and abilities essential for workers to become competent.
- To detect the most common difficulties and deficiencies among students during the training period in the workplace, which could compromise their future employability.

Round tables allowed sharing different perspectives and problems that employers face in recruiting young workers. It turns out, however, that regardless of industry and size of companies for all employers motivation and social skills are key to effectiveness. Their absence or insufficient development creates difficulties in finding suitable candidates to work and to achieve optimal results and satisfaction in the workplace.

The biggest difficulties in the selection of personnel are resulting from:

- Lack of motivation
- No future prospects
- Indifferent attitude to work
- Expectations of High Salaries
- Lack of relevant qualification

Solely according to participants from Spain, these difficulties are negligible because of the high unemployment in the country.

Participants in the round table agree that in the vocational education a special attention has to be paid on the development of the following key competencies:

- Ability to work in a team and individually
- Social and communicational skills
- Professional ethics
- Not to be afraid to start from simple works

- Accuracy and attention
- Foreign language skills
- Responsibility
- Conflict management

Very important conclusion of these discussions is that there is a need of constant cooperation between schools and the business in order to improve training in vocational schools. This will meet the utmost needs of both interested parties - young people and employers. The ultimate effect will be on the development of the economy. Moreover it is vitally important in terms of modern economic development and dynamics in the labor market in Europe.

## **5. Comparing the survey results with data from the round tables with employers**

The comparative analysis of the information obtained by these two independent channels confirms the initial thesis of the DECO project on:

- the importance of the key competencies for the realization of the people and the efficiency of the economy;
- the need for interaction between VET centers and businesses.

The biggest difficulties in finding suitable employees arise from:

- Low motivation for working
- High expectations of social benefits
- Lack of some of the key competencies for job performance
- Lack of job applicants in the labour market
- Lack of relevant qualifications
- Company localitation

The most important competences for the realization of young people are:

- Cooperation (team working)
- Problem solving (concentration and understanding of real reasons, participants and solutions)
- Efficiency (concentration, planning, diligence, orientation towards results)
- Effective Communication (active listening, asking questions, empathy)
- Stress resiliency (self-knowledge, self-control, stress management)
- Digital competencies (IT and use of office equipment)

The competencies, whose development should be central to the vocational preparation, are:

- Cooperation (team working)
- Problem solving (concentration and understanding of real reasons, participants and solutions)
- Digital competencies (IT and use of office equipment)
- Effective Communication (active listening, asking questions, empathy)
- Efficiency (concentration, planning, diligence, orientation towards results)

## 6. Good practices

Information on activities of VET centers which have produced positive results on the motivation and the preparation of students has been also exchanged during the round table discussions.

It can be concluded that good practices are based on effective communication between participants in the process of education and training and real business. The most visible results there are:

- Cooperation with the other vocational schools in the region
- Rewards to the innovational ideas of the students and supporting their projects

- Success stories of the former students or friends
- Participation in exhibitions and different activities
- Regular study trips in companies
- Participation in professional skills competitions
- Meetings with the representatives of the vocational schools and employers
- Presentation of the process and the system in the partnership countries, training activities within project partnerships
- Constant contact with the employers, regular working meetings

## 7. Final conclusions

The research conducted in four countries with over 250 participants via two independent channels of gathering information indicates that today's employers need employees with developed internal motivation for work and having developed skills in teamwork, efficiency, constructive problem solving, proactive, self-discipline, initiative and creativity. I.e. they often give priority to these 'soft' skills to professional abilities. The lack of professional skills much easier for a short time and with less consumption of resources could be compensated on the spot in the working environment. While social skills and motivation are being developed in the course of life and this is an endless process. The earlier education and training begin to focus to this aspect of intelligence; the better would be the results.

This makes the topic of changes that should occur in VET schools especially relevant. It is necessary the new programs and plans of training to be developed so as to open the space for the development of key competencies. It is also necessary a special attention to be paid to the qualifications of the teachers and trainers there with a view to:

- developing their understanding of the current needs of learners and business environment,
- improving their preparation to meet these needs,
- providing them the necessary methodological tools to use in the learning process.