

JANUARY 2024

SKILL4VET-APP
DIGITAL
REPORT



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SKILLS4VETAPP

UPSKILLING VET TRAINERS TO ACT AS APPRENTICES COACHES

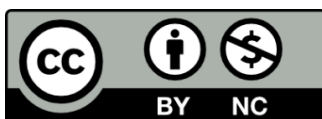
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Project Number: 2022-1-EL01-KA220-VET-000088384

Skills4VET-app Digital Report

VET Trainers' and Providers' Needs on Apprenticeships

Project No: 2022-1EL01-KA220-VET-000088384



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Introduction

National Frameworks on Apprenticeships and VET Provision

Apprenticeships are means to smooth the transition from school/education to the job market. In Europe, the apprenticeship scheme is based on system-level features, depending on the countries' national framework.

In Italy, the training structures provide publicly funded vocational education and training courses are those accredited by the regions, based on general criteria that set minimum quality standards at the national level. The overall VET system refers to the nationally agreed definition, in a special Directory, of professional figures with minimum training standards, to models of professional qualification and diploma certificates, to professional areas. Every year the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies transfers to the Regions the financial resources for the pathways aimed at the fulfillment of the right to education and vocational training. The training actions carried out within these pathways are the subject of an annual monitoring report by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, with the support of INAPP (National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies).

In Greece, apprenticeships have been a priority in VET policy developments since 2013. The 2016 National Strategic Framework for upgrading the VET sector, included the gradual introduction of the current system of apprenticeship comprising of a) the EPAS scheme offered at the upper secondary level, b) the EPAL (vocational education schools) scheme offered at the post-secondary level and c) the vocational training institutes (IEK) that will be offered at post-secondary level, leading to qualifications at NQF/EQF level 5 after four semesters of learning at VET institutes and one semester at the workplace. School-based VET programmes are offered at the upper secondary level (EPAL lyceum, qualifications at NQF/EQF level 4)

Regarding the Greek model of governance of apprenticeships, the Ministry of Education is the appointed institution to coordinates the entire apprenticeship system, while the 2016 VET strategy has established the National Committee for VET and apprenticeships comprising the general secretaries of the Ministry of Education, of Lifelong learning, of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Finance and on the other hand the Technical Committee for VET and apprenticeships comprising directors from the Ministries of Education and Labour and the Manpower Employment Organization.

Finally, the Spanish system of apprenticeship was introduced in 2012 as part of the national labour reform, aimed at fighting youth unemployment and is referred



to as the “dual vocational training system”, regulated by the Royal Decree 1529/2012 that lays out the foundations of the dual vocational training system. The Organic Law 3/2022, of March 31, on the organisation and integration of Vocational Training establishes in its article 55 the dual nature of Vocational Training:

“The entire vocational training offer of Grades C and D linked to the National Catalog of Professional Skills Standards will have a dual nature, incorporating a training phase in a company or comparable organisation. The offer of the Specialization Courses of Grade E will have a dual character, [...]. The offer of Grades A and B may or may not have this character, depending on the characteristics of each training”.

Providers of dual training in Spain are VET providers, or “Centros de Formación Profesional” (FP) which are accredited by the regional authorities. Public administration bodies in charge of the implementation of dual training are the regional governments -as education depends on regions and autonomous communities- and ministries in charge of vocational education. In some regions, initiatives are also taken by employment ministries, in the frame of education for employment contexts.



Part 1- The Skills 4VET-app Needs Questionnaire - A Quantitative Survey

1.1 Methodology

The survey has been launched in 3 European countries, namely Italy, Greece and Spain, through a detailed questionnaire developed and elaborated by the partnership of Skills4vet-app. The questionnaire was circulated to the survey participants through Google Forms during the first half of July 2023. Being part of a wide network of VET centres, all partner organizations contacted directly to staff of VET centres and representatives from the VET sector through their social media, email etc., that have been identified as the appropriate target group to contribute to the project development.

The survey collected a total number of 125 answers that are presented and elaborated below.

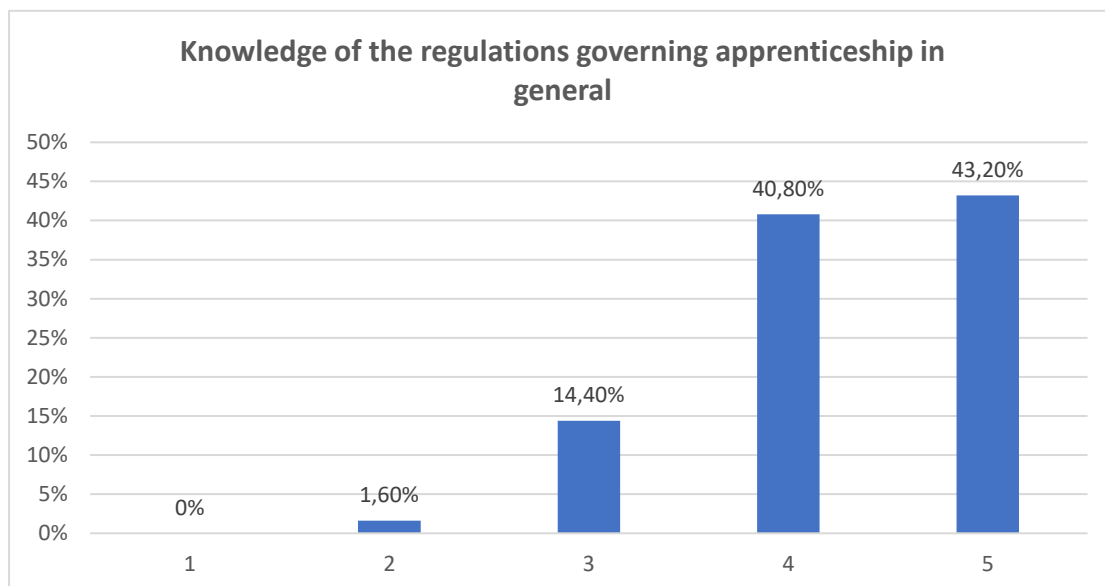
1.2. Presentation of Results

In this first scale of the survey, the participants were asked to evaluate the importance of statements regarding the placement of a student in an apprenticeship. In all 24 questions, the 5-point Likert scale has been used, as follows:

1. Not at all important
2. Slightly important
3. Moderately important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important

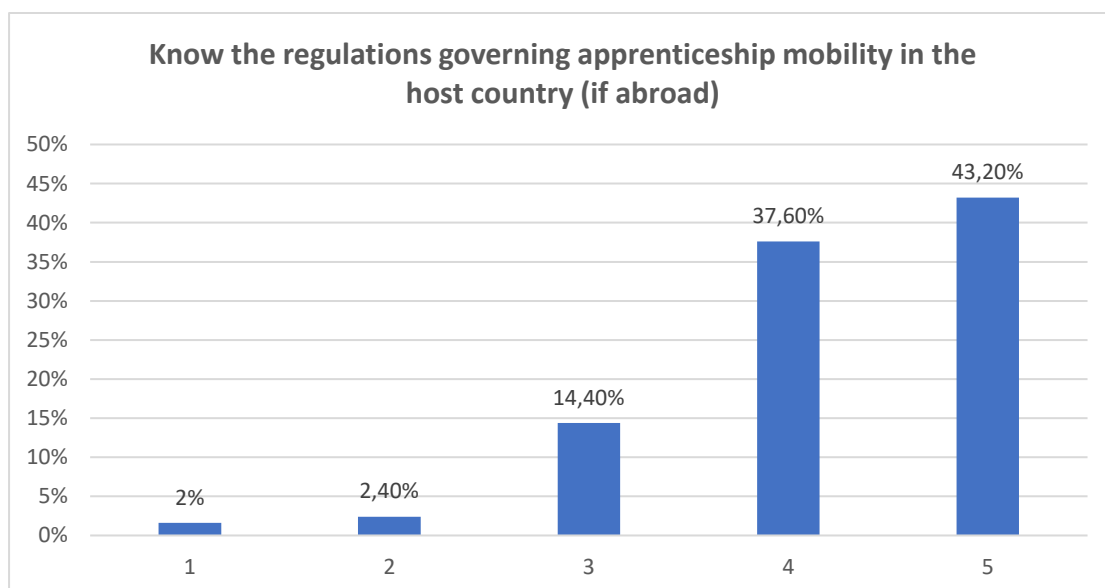
Question 1

The first question concerned the importance of knowing the regulations governing apprenticeships in general. As shown in the graph below, the majority of the responders (43.2%) consider it extremely important and 40.8% very important. 14.4% rated the importance of the statement as average.



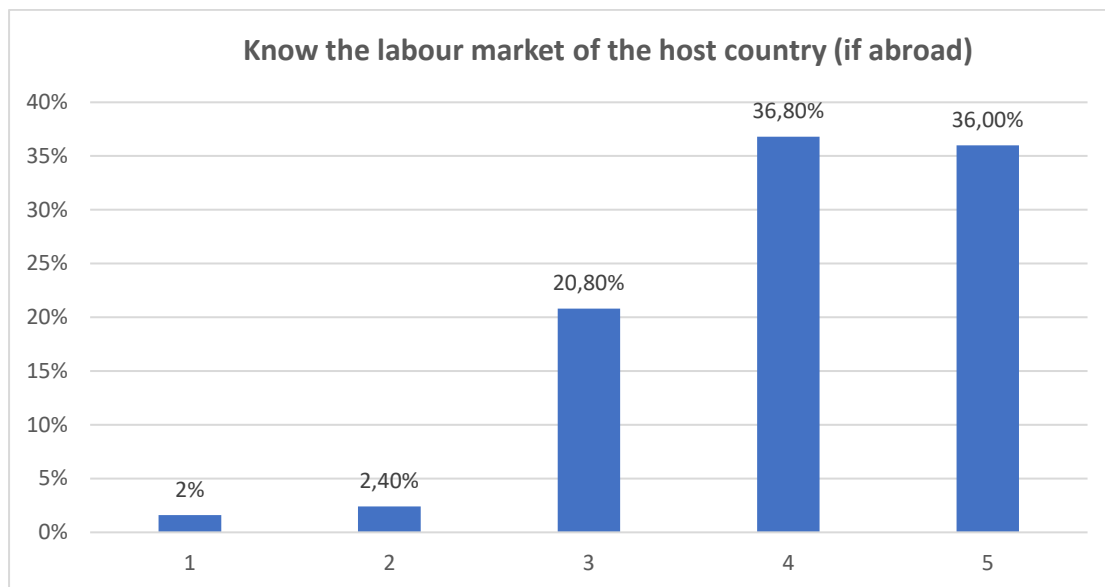
Question 2

The second question was related to the importance of knowing the regulations governing apprenticeship mobility in the host country (if abroad). As above, the majority (43.2%) rated it as extremely important and 37.6% as very important. Only 2% of the 125 participants answered that it is not important at all.



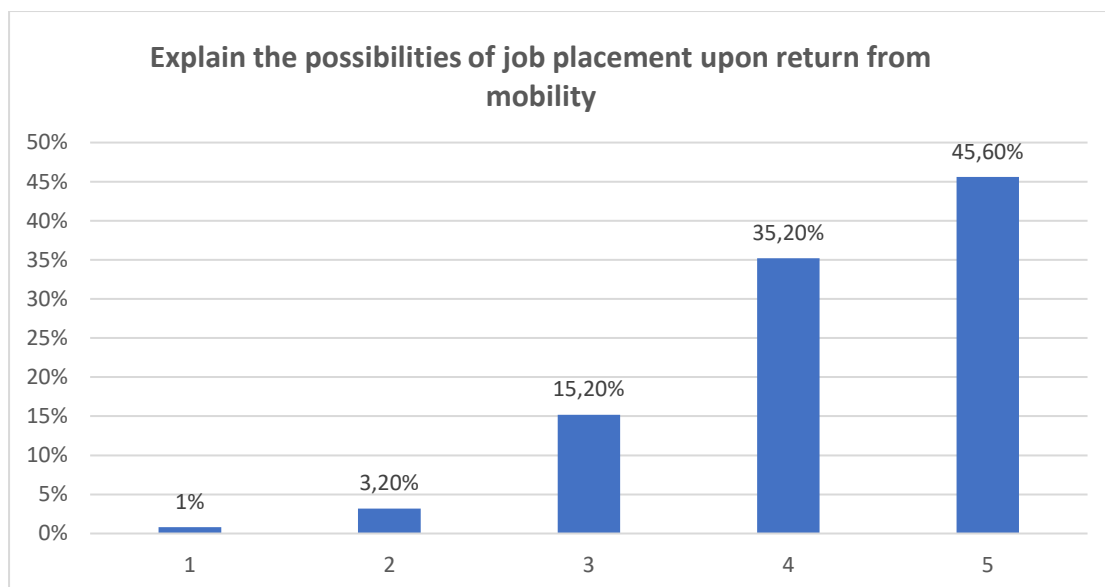
Question 3

Question 3 was related to the importance of knowing the labour market of the host country (if abroad). Here, 36% and 36.8% answered with 5 (extremely important) and 4 (very important) respectively. 20.8% of the participants rate the question with 3 (moderately important).



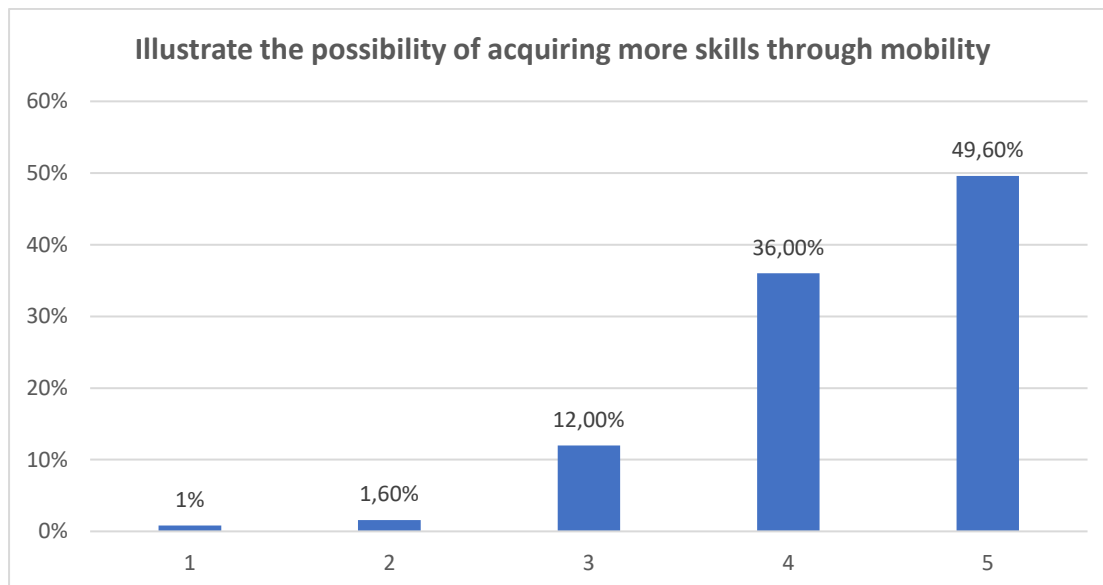
Question 4

In question 4, participants had to evaluate the importance of explaining the possibilities of job placement upon return from mobility. Almost 46% rated this statement with 5 (extremely important) and 35% with 4 (very important). Generally, the statement was rated very positively.



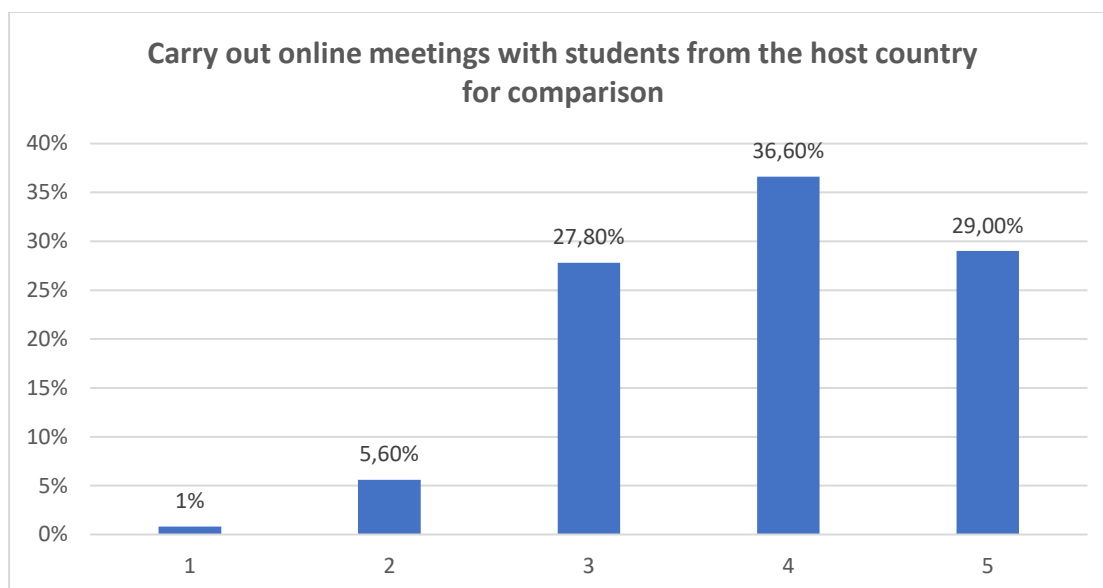
Question 5

Question 5 related the importance of illustrating the possibility of acquiring more skills through mobility. Almost half of the responders evaluated the statement as extremely important and 36% as very important.



Question 6

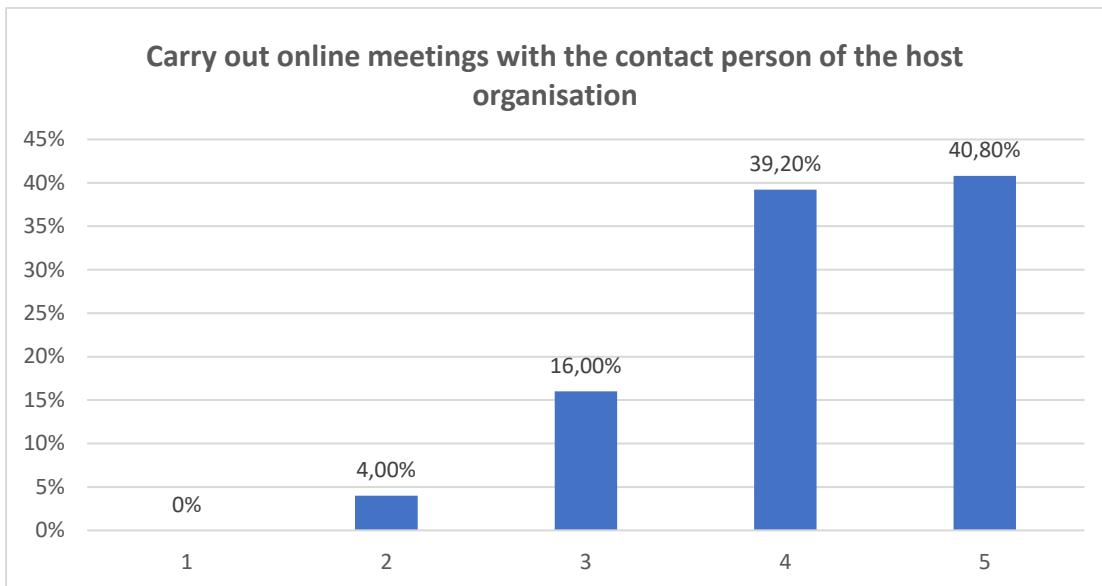
Question 6 was related to the importance of carrying out online meetings with students from the host country for comparison. Answers to this question varied. 29% rated the statement with 5 (extremely important) and 37% with 4 (very important). 28% rated it as average and 5.6% as slightly important.



Question 7

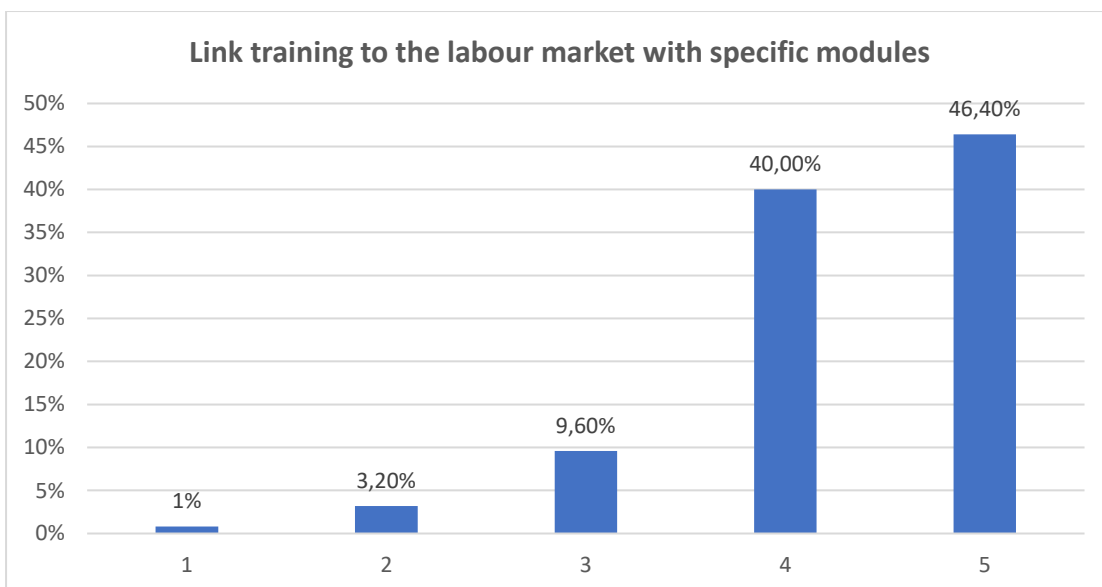


Question 7 concerned the importance of carrying out online meetings with the contact person of the host organisation. 80% of the respondents evaluated positively this statement (41% and 39% rated it with 5 and 4 respectively), which is an outstanding result. 16% rated the statement as moderately important.



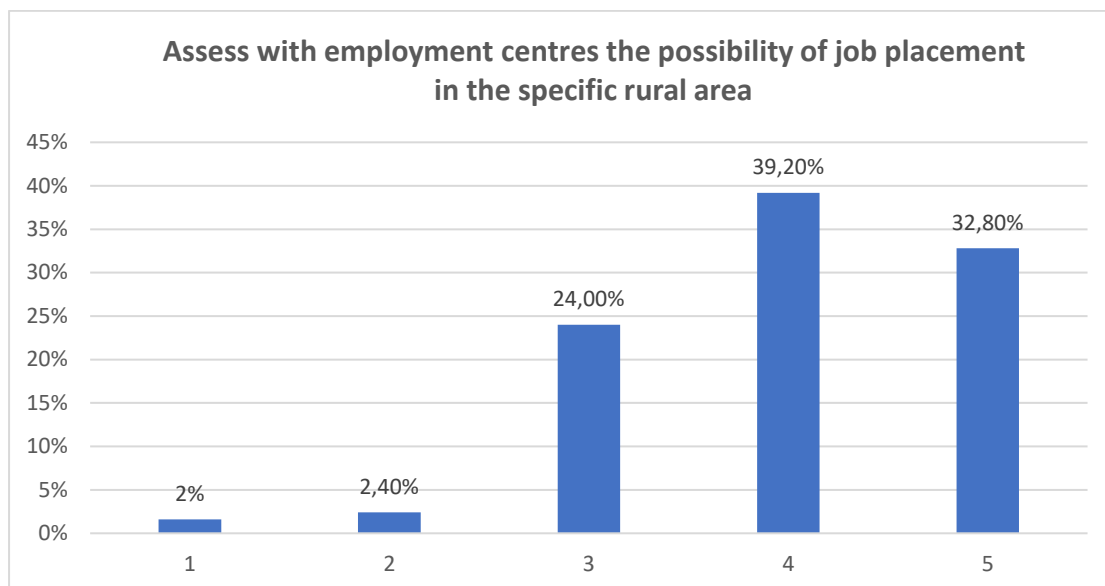
Question 8

In question 8, the participants were asked to evaluate the emphasis on linking training to the labour market with specific modules. As above, the vast majority rated the statement very positively. Precisely, 46.4% answered that it is extremely important to do so and 40% rated it as very important.



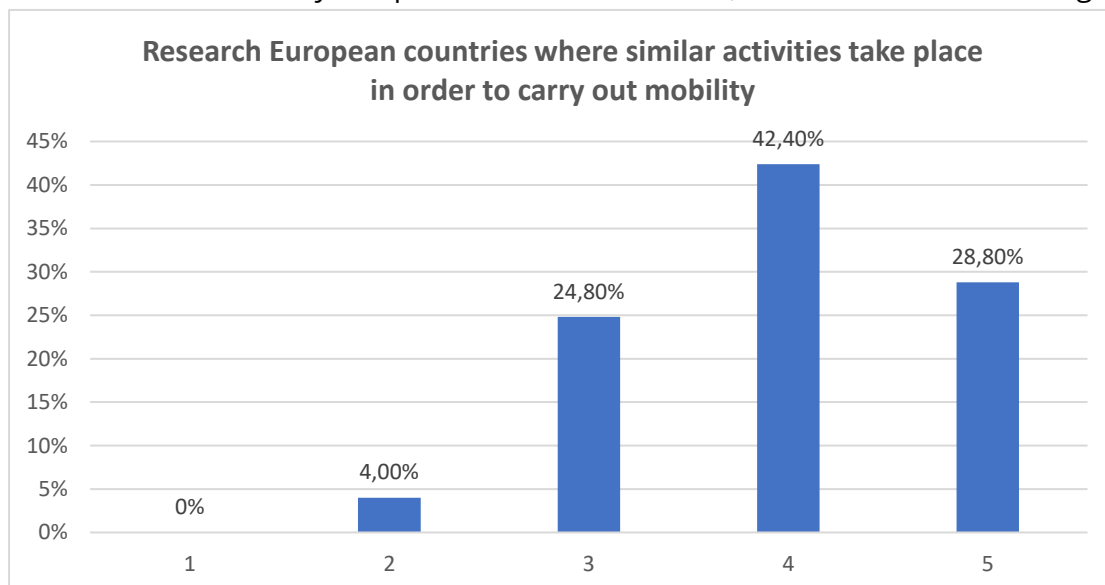
Question 9

In Question 9 regarding assessing with employment centres the possibility of job placement in the specific rural area, answers varied. More than almost 32% of the respondents rated the statement as very important and more than 39% as extremely important. 24% of the 125 participants answered that it is moderately important and only 2,4% as slightly important.



Question 10

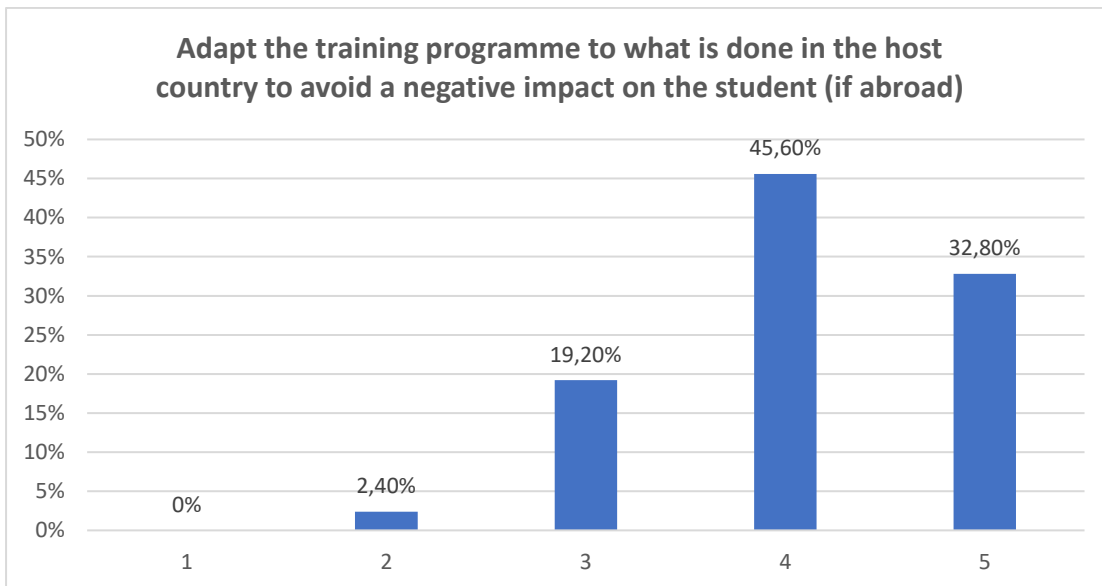
Question 10 was related to the significance of searching European countries where similar activities take place in order to carry out mobility. As above, more than 42% of the responders answered that it is very important to do so and 29% that it is extremely important. The rest 24,8% rate it as average.



Question 11

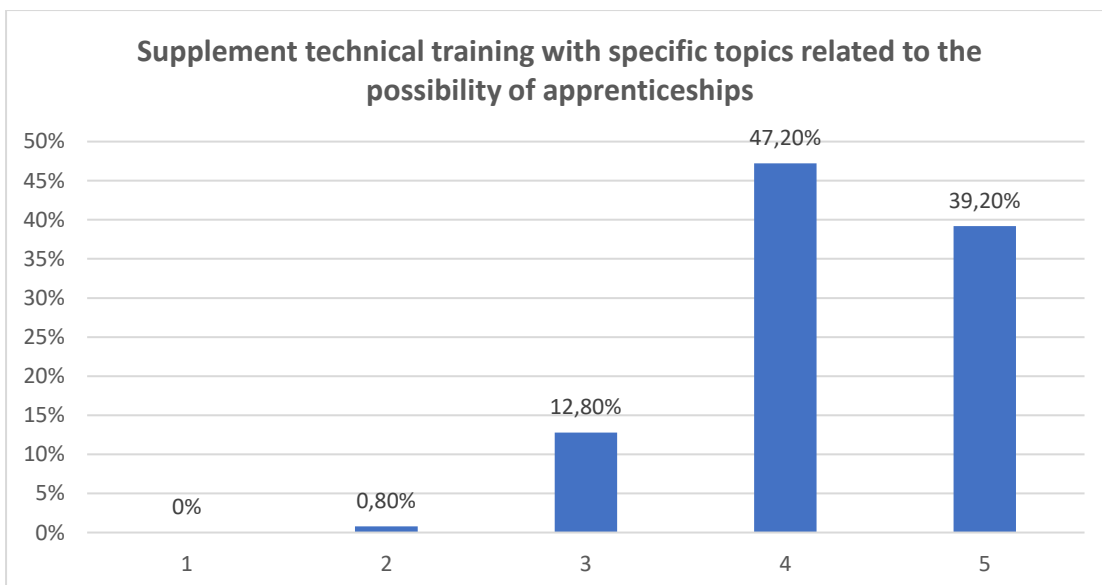


Question 11 elaborated on the importance of adapting the training programme to what is done in the host country to avoid a negative impact on the student (if abroad). Interestingly, the vast majority of the survey participants answered very positively: 32,8% rated it with 5 and 45,6% with 4. The rest 19% rated it with 3.



Question 12

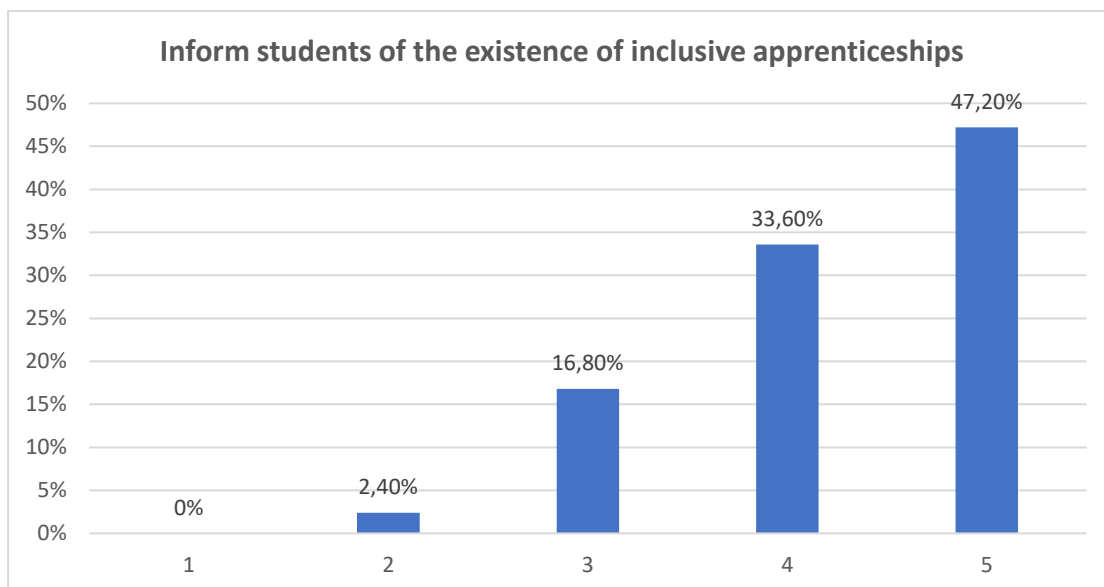
In question 12, the participants were asked to rate the emphasis on supplementing technical training with specific topics related to the possibility of apprenticeships. All the responders evaluated the statement very highly. Specifically, 39% rated it with 5 and 47% with 4.



Question 13

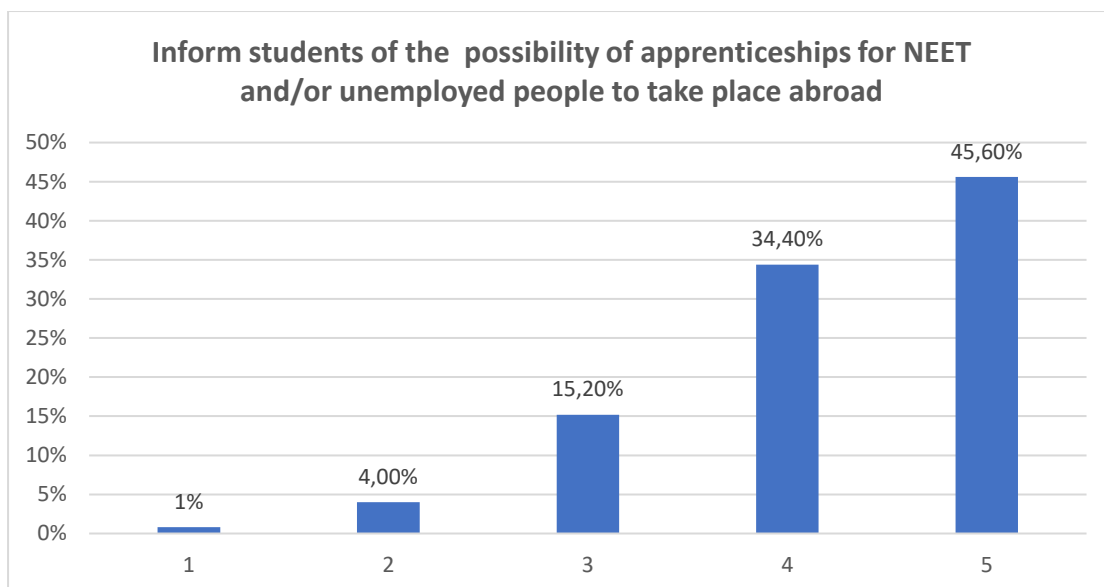


In question 13, the respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of informing the students of the existence of inclusive apprenticeships. As above, the answers have been very positive. 47,2% rate the statement with 5 (extremely important) and 33,6% with 4 (very important).



Question 14

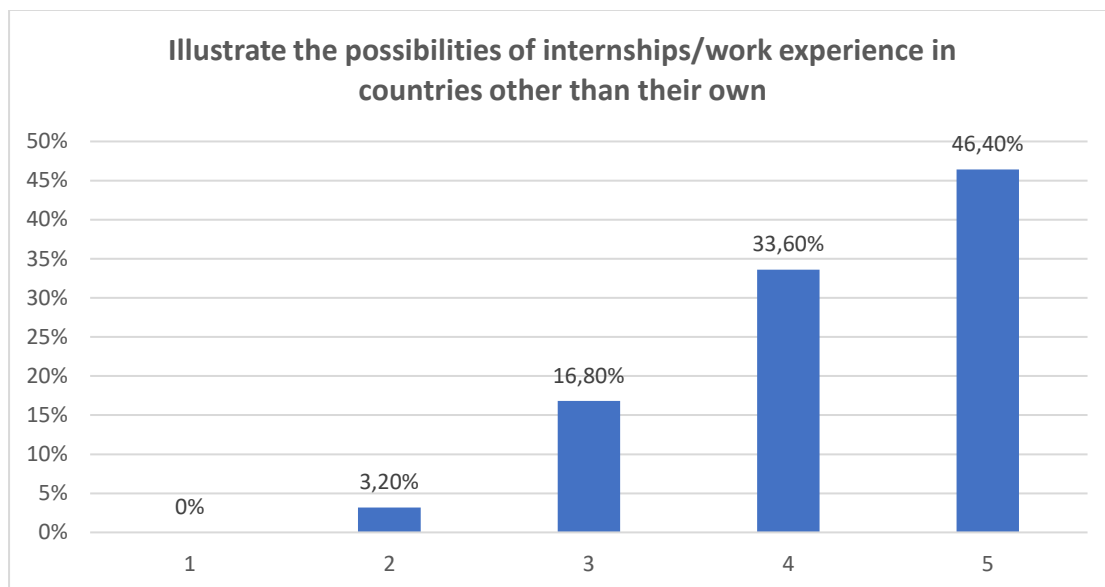
Question 14 concerned the importance of informing students of the possibility of apprenticeships for NEET and/or unemployed people to take place abroad. The majority, over 45% rated the statement as extremely important and 34.4% as very important. 15% of the 125 participants answered on average.



Question 15

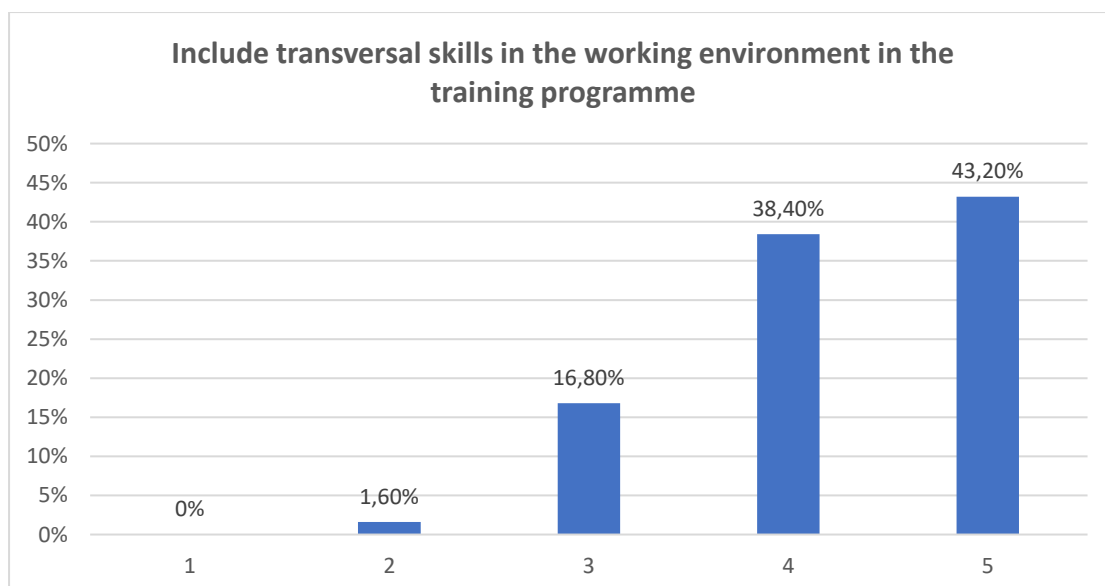


Question 15 was related to the illustration of the possibilities of internships/work experience in countries other than their own. Similarly, almost 47% evaluated it as extremely important and almost 34% as very important.



Question 16

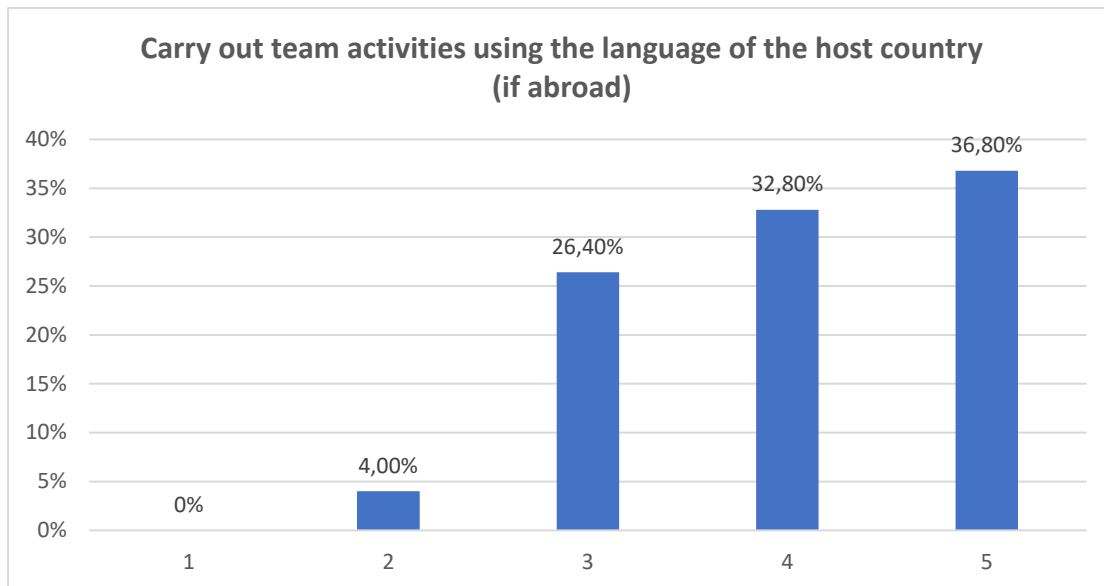
Question 16 was related to the inclusion of transversal skills in the working environment in the training programme, where over 43% rated it with 5 (extremely important). 38,4% answered with 4 (very important) and 16,8% with 3 (moderately important).



Question 17

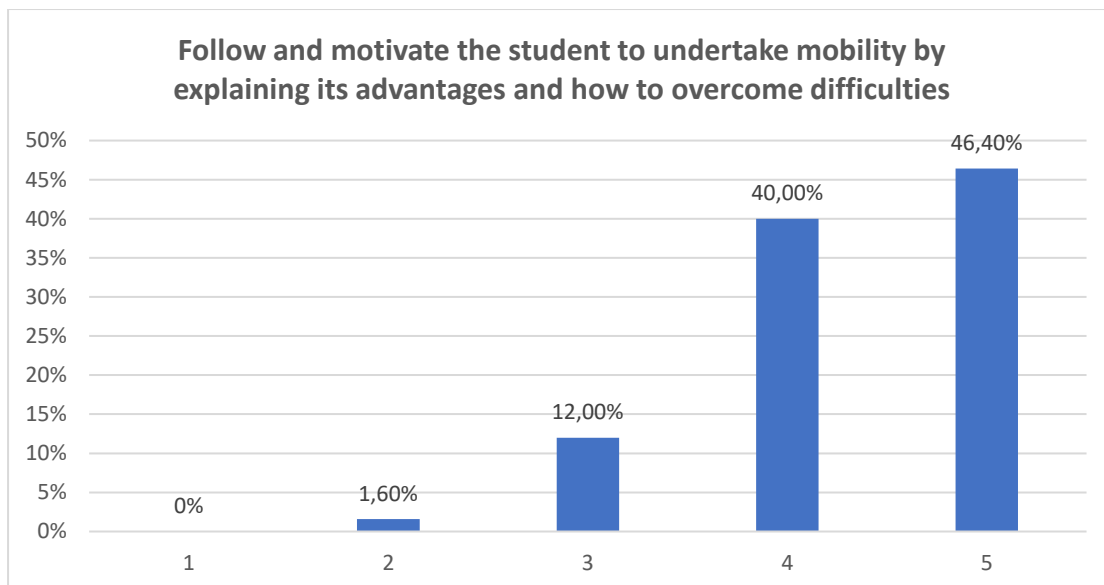


In question 17 regarding the importance of carrying out team activities using the language of the host country (if abroad), answers varied. Specifically, almost 37% of the 125 responders rated it with 5 and almost 33% with 4, while 26.4% rated it with 3.



Question 18

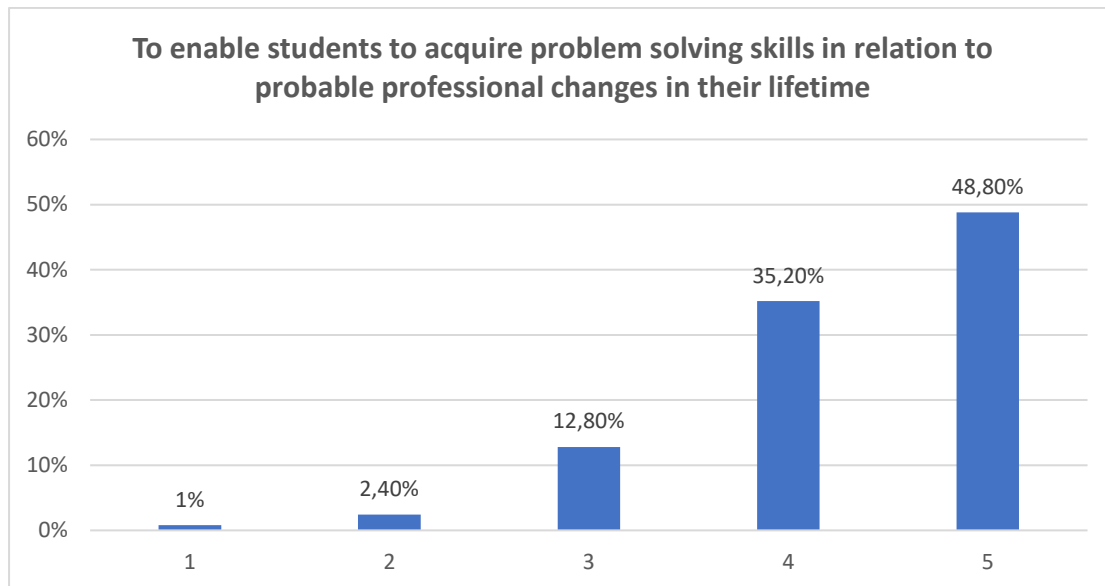
Question 18 elaborated on the importance of following and motivating the student to undertake mobility by explaining its advantages and how to overcome difficulties. In this question, over 46% rated it as extremely important and 40% as very important.



Question 19

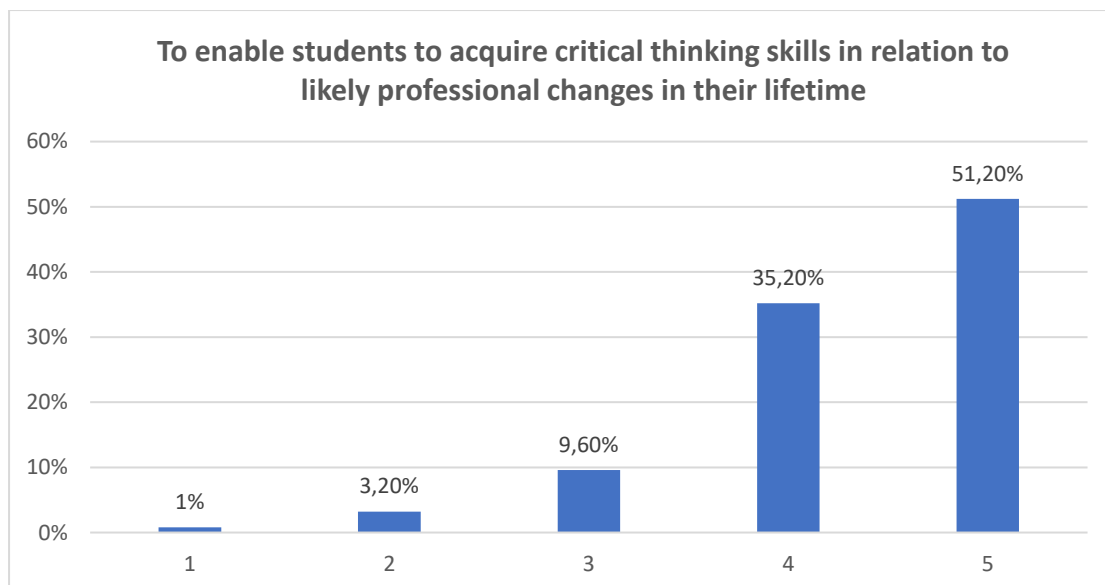


Question 19 was related to the importance of enabling students to acquire problem-solving skills in relation to probable professional changes in their lifetime. The majority, almost 49% rated the statement as extremely important and over 35% as very important. Almost 13% rated it as moderately important.



Question 20

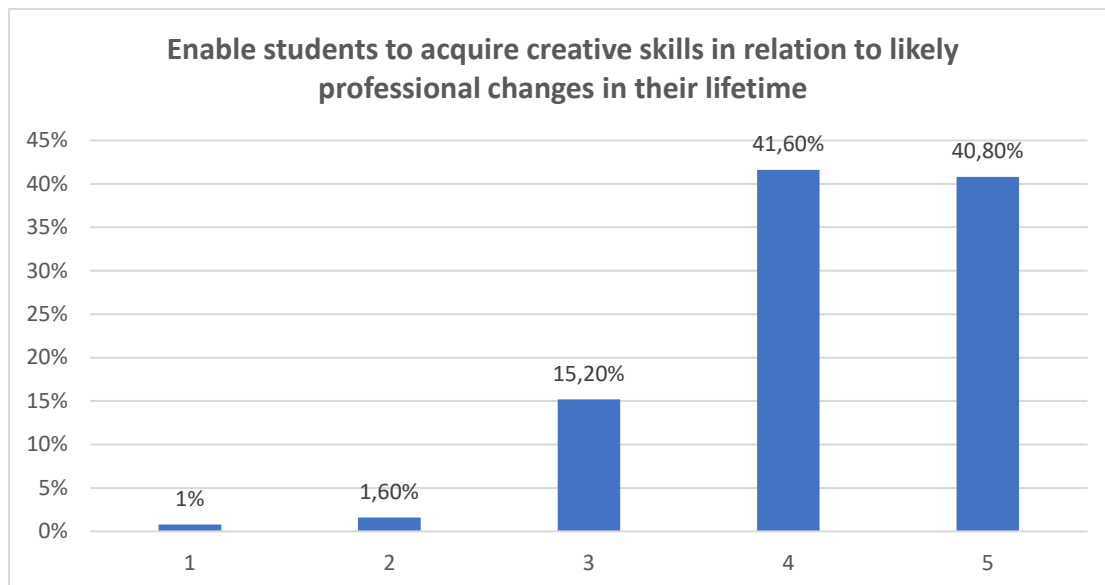
In question 20 regarding the emphasis on enabling students to acquire critical thinking skills in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime, the vast majority of the answers were very positive. Precisely, over 51% rated it with 5 and over 35% with 4. Finally, almost 10% rated it as moderately important.



Question 21

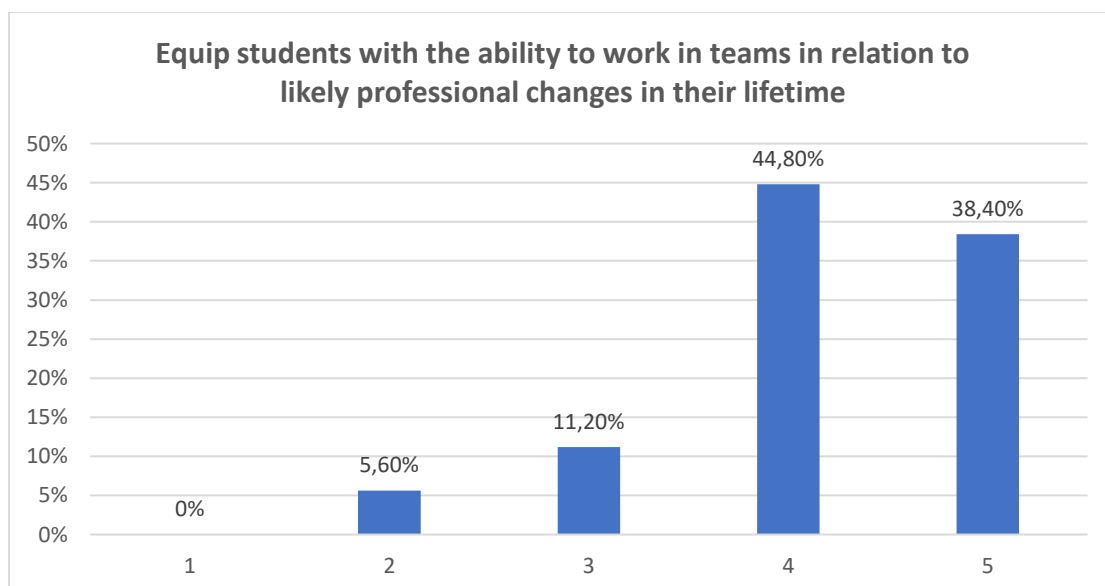


In question 21 regarding the importance of enabling students to acquire creative skills in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime over 40% rated it as extremely important and 41.6% as very important.



Question 22

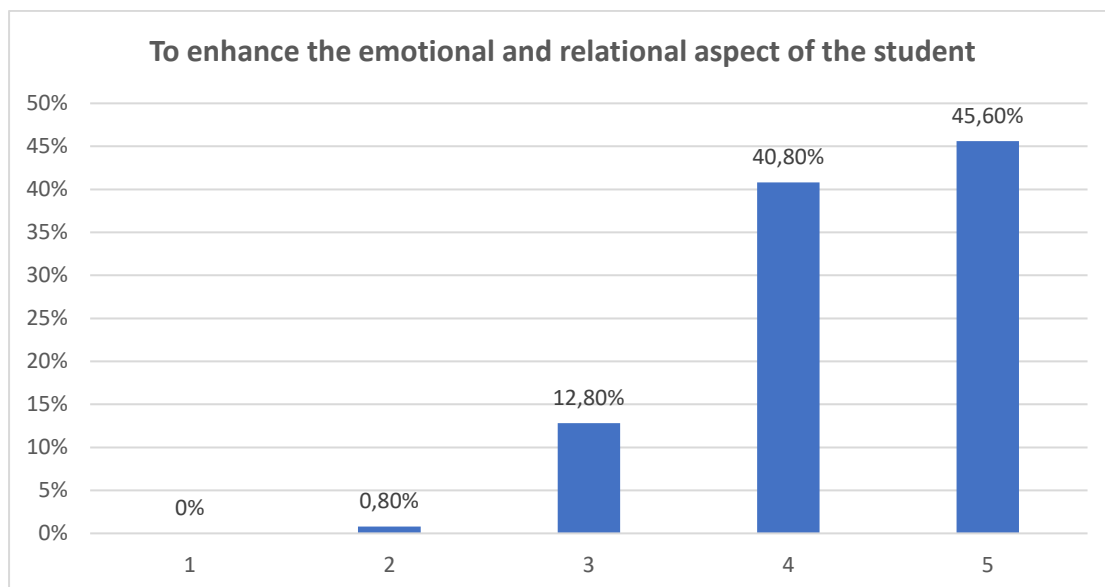
Question 22 concerned the importance of equipping students with the ability to work in teams in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime. Similarly, as above, almost 38.5% rated this statement with 5 and almost 45% with 4. A percentage of 11.2% rated it as moderately important.



Question 23

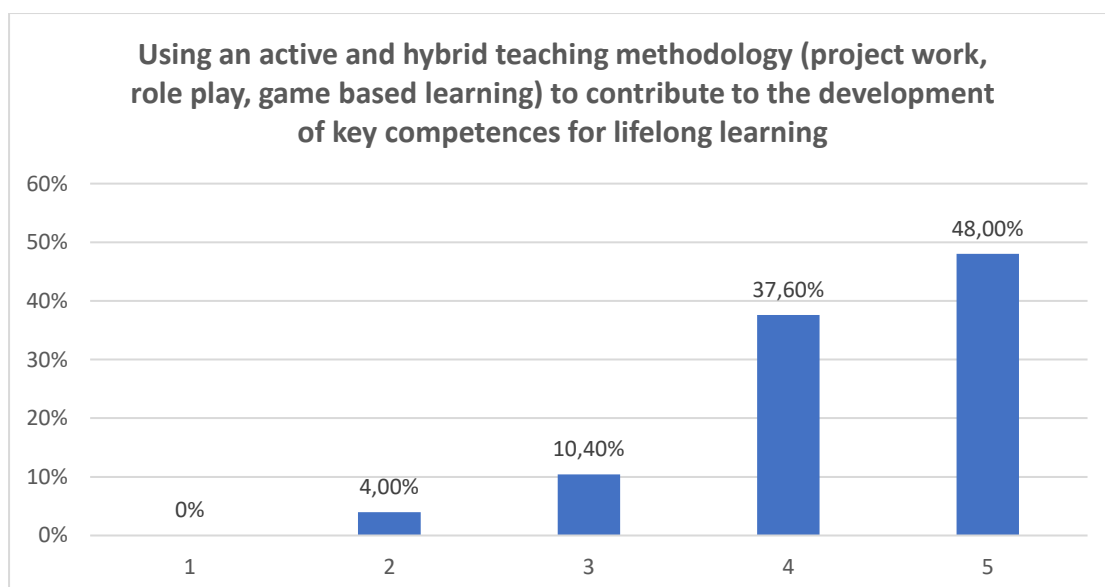


In question 23, the participants were asked to evaluate the importance of enhancing the emotional and relational aspects of the student. Over 45% rate it as extremely important and almost 41% as very important. A percentage of 12.8% rate it as moderately important.



Question 24

Finally, question 24 was related to the importance of using an active and hybrid teaching methodology (project work, role play, game-based learning) to contribute to the development of key competencies for lifelong learning. In this final question, the majority (48%) rated it with 5 and over 37% with 4. 10.4% of the 125 participants evaluated the importance of the statement as average.



1.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The results of the survey presented above are indicative of the need to equip VET trainers and teachers with the necessary tools to support, guide and motivate VET learners towards apprenticeships.

First, it should be noted that only a few statements have been rated by participants with 1 (not important at all) or 2 (slightly important).

The vast majority of the participants evaluated the above needs as extremely (5) and very (4) important. Based on these findings, the needs that have been highlighted in the survey, where over 80% of the respondents rated them as extremely important and very important, are the following:

- the need to know the regulations governing apprenticeship in general (84%)
- the need to illustrate the possibility of acquiring more skills through mobility (85.6%)
- the need to link training to the labour market with specific modules (86.4%)
- the need to supplement technical training with specific topics related to the possibility of apprenticeships (86.4%)
- the need to include transversal skills in the working environment in the training programme (81.6%)
- the need to follow and motivate the student to undertake mobility by explaining its advantages and how to overcome difficulties (86.4%)
- the need to enable students to acquire critical thinking skills in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime (84%)
- the need to enable students to acquire critical thinking skills in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime (86.4%)
- the need to enable students to acquire creative skills in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime (82.4%)
- the need to equip students with the ability to work in teams in relation to likely professional changes in their lifetime (83.2%)
- the need to enhance the emotional and relational aspect of the student (86.4%)
- the need to use an active and hybrid teaching methodology (project work, role play, game-based learning) to contribute to the development of key competencies for lifelong learning (85.6%).

Part 2- The Skills 4VET-app Needs Interview – A Qualitative Survey

2.1 Methodology

For our research on the effectiveness of vocational education and training (VET) programs, a targeted interview process with professionals in the field was designed and carried out. A total number of 20 VET trainers and people involved in the design and implementation of apprenticeships took part in this research phase, specifically selected based on their extensive experience and diverse backgrounds. The interviewees (6 from Spain, 5 from Greece and 9 from Italy) were chosen based on their years of experience, and we ensured representation from both public and private VET institutions. To contact the participants, a combination of email and phone calls has been utilized, explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their voluntary participation. The interviewees' profiles were diverse, both males and females, with ages ranging from mid-30s to mid-40 40s. The vast majority of the interviewees are university graduates and each interview was carefully documented with responses. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, allowing for in-depth discussions on their experiences and insights within the VET field.

2.2. Presentation of Interview Answers

1. Did you place students from your courses in apprenticeships?

-If yes, please explain how you motivated and subsequently supported the student during the apprenticeship period.

-If no, please explain what difficulties were encountered.

17 out of the 20 interviewees answered positively on the first question. They stated that they motivated their students by emphasizing the prominence of training, skills acquisition and in-job experience, the importance of creating professional networks and the need to have a guided first step to career development, all of which will ease insertion in the job market. Regarding support during the apprenticeship, common tools have been developing a working plan that sets clear targets and learning outcomes, continuous communication and regular checking to ensure a secure working environment and offer guidance to handle difficulties and challenges.

On the other hand, the interviewees that answered negatively, indicated the lack of job placement and information as the difficulties encountered.

2. Have you used the mobility tool for apprenticeship students?

-If yes, please explain how the mobility took place and what strategies you used to guide the student during the mobility.

-If no, please explain the difficulties encountered.

9 out of the 20 interviewees answered positively on this question. Most of them have used the mobility tool to set specific training methods/programs and learning outcomes, while, in order to guide apprentices, the methods used have been the identification of an organization suitable for the scope of the apprenticeship, contacts with partners institutes, regular communication, support on interviews, encouragement with local language learning, as well as an evaluation tool for an apprenticeship. 3D animation videos and events have also been indicated as a form of presenting the prosecution of the apprenticeship upon completion.

Regarding the 11 negative answers, the lack of contact with other educational institutions and employers, limited financial resources, logistical challenges as well and the lack of interest in some cases, have been stated as the main difficulties encountered.

3. Explain what tools you find useful to motivate students to undertake apprenticeships.

To motivate students, interviewees pointed out the importance of making students aware of the prominence of practical training and the acquisition of in-job skills, the development of flexible working plans with clear goals and rewards, examples of success stories, job interview simulations, as well as visits on social media, videos and apprenticeships' websites. Moreover, they referred to the organization of events and workshops with the participation of local professionals and industries, that make students aware of the current market needs and the creation of a professional network.

4. Explain what tools you consider useful to have to motivate students to do mobility during their apprenticeship.

Most of the interviewees stated that any kind of resource that makes students aware of the benefits and opportunities of taking part in mobility, such as a boost of CVs, enhancement of employment prospects, personal development and language and inter-cultural skills, established collaboration with foreign institutions that will generate trust to students, are all great importance. Some

other useful tools mentioned, have been the information from the Office of Professional and Career Development, counselling, real-case stories, information on available funding and grants and company mentors. It should be noted that some of the interviewees underlined the need for provision of support in organizing such activities.

5. Explain what your knowledge should be in relation to rural area apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships in rural areas present specific challenges that one should be aware of to be able to implement effectively such an apprenticeship. The interviewees agreed on the importance of knowing the dynamics of the local labour market and the local rural economy, having good knowledge of the market needs of the region as well as of the type of skills the trainee must possess and establishing a network of collaboration and communication with local industries and regional economic development organizations. The design and implementation of a program of capacity-building has also been indicated as an asset.

6. Describe what activities you carry out to get to know the realities in which you can place a student in an apprenticeship or internship

Some of the very interesting answers to this question include trainers' involvement in setting a clear and realistic training program for apprenticeship, checking out for opportunities for collaboration with local employers, establishing and maintenance of a network with local professionals and representatives of local associations and the participation in relevant conferences/seminars/ trade shows. Moreover, analyses of economic reports and local market trends and communication with colleagues to gain feedback on completed apprenticeships have also been indicated as an activity in this process.

7. Describe what tools you have at your disposal for the placement of students in apprenticeships/internships/mobility.

The resources pointed out in this question refer to the websites of chambers of commerce and professional associations, networks and established relations with SMEs and industry representatives and local employers, work scholarships from public bodies, targeted/regional funding for mobility abroad as well as online platforms dedicated to VET internships and Erasmus programs.

2.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Interview Information

The great majority of the interviewees have had some experience with the placement of students in apprenticeships and offer some valuable insights regarding the approach, design and implementation of such an activity.

Regarding sources of motivating students to undertake an apprenticeship, emphasis is put on skills acquisition and the development of professional networks that would facilitate entrance into the job market. Some other tools that have been mentioned, which could ease this task, are the use of examples of success stories, job interview simulations and the organization of events where local economic professionals would make students aware of the current market needs. Additionally, the development of concrete working plans, continuous communication and regular follow-ups have been identified as the most common means of supporting students during their apprenticeships.

On the flip side, there has been identified a lack of information on job placements, proper guidelines in the organization and placement of students in an apprenticeship, as well as the need to make students aware of the importance of apprenticeships and practical training as a first step to career development and acquisition of in-job skills. Regarding mobilities during the apprenticeships, the lack of networks with other educational institutions and employers, limited financial resources and administrative challenges have been indicated as difficulties in using this tool. Counselling, mentoring, information on available funding, as well as any kind of source that would make apprentices aware of the benefits offered by undertaking mobility, have been pointed out as very useful resources.

One of the major elements retrieved by the survey is the consensus on the necessity of knowledge of the dynamics of the local economy and the local labour market needs, in order for trainers to be able to establish and maintain a network within regional development organizations, that could facilitate the placement of an apprenticeship and secure a positive working environment. The survey points out a lack of resources in this sector and to the necessity of provision to VET trainers regarding learners' motivation, the identification of suitable organizations for cooperation and means of continuing support throughout the duration of an apprenticeship.

Part 3- Overall Conclusion

The results of the two parts of the research conducted and presented above demonstrate the need to equip VET trainers and teachers with the necessary tools to motivate support and guide VET learners towards apprenticeships.

The analysis of the surveys illustrates several skills that trainers need to be equipped with for the aforementioned purpose, such as information on the acquisition of more skills through mobility and the existence of inclusive apprenticeships, information and motivation to undertake for NEET/unemployed to undertake mobilities abroad, skills to enhance students' abilities in critical-thinking and problem-solving and the emotional and relational aspect of the student, as well as the use of hybrid teaching methods to contribute to lifelong learning competences and knowledge.

In a similar vein, the feedback gained from the survey points out several difficulties and challenges that hinder the organization of an apprenticeship and the support of VET learners during it. Various tools that VET trainers and providers should be equipped with have been highlighted, such as professional networks, platforms, organization of workshops and communication resources, in order to properly identify training placements, and plan and implement an apprenticeship successfully. Further on this, the development of specific tools for apprenticeships in rural also emerges as a necessity, to apply to the characteristics of local economy and regional dynamics.

