

## **National Report Germany**

**Leonardo da Vinci  
EUROMEAT**

**Phase 3: Development of a transparency model**

**Elaborated by bfw (April 2007)**

### **CONTACT**

Antje Utecht und Tanja Kreetz  
Competence Center EUROPA (CCE)  
im Berufsbildungswerk  
Gemeinnützige Bildungseinrichtung des DGB GmbH

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## Contact details

Berufsbildungswerk  
Gemeinnützige Bildungseinrichtung des DGB GmbH (bftw)  
Competence Center EUROPA  
Im Neuenheimer Feld 582  
69120 Heidelberg  
Phone.: +49 6221-50 257 47  
Fax: +49 6221-50 257 44  
www.bftw.de  
Email:  
Antje Utecht (Operational Manager of Competence Center EUROPA, bftw):  
[antje.utecht@bftw.EU.com](mailto:antje.utecht@bftw.EU.com)  
Tanja Kreetz (EU-Project Coordinator): [tanja.kreetz@bftw.EU.com](mailto:tanja.kreetz@bftw.EU.com)

## 1. Introduction

The national report of phase 2 on the training offers and professional profiles within the German meat industry found that the German meat industry is characterised by a structural crisis related to increasing competition, pricing pressure and the struggle for a market share. While concentration processes and an extension of capacities took place in large-scale companies, this did not lead to an increase in the number of employees and trainees as it may have been expected. As a result of the market pressure, large-scale companies are now increasingly outsourcing activities to staff that are falling out of the social insurance system. In some companies the share of workers contracted via foreign firms amounts to 40 to 50 per cent. When it comes to the training situation in the sector, the number of trainees in vocational training programmes in the field of slaughtering and meat processing also dropped down considerably (from 23,000 in 1985 to 8,700 in 2006).

Another result of the report is that stronger efforts have to be made in training promotion, public relations and awareness rising in the sector to enhance interest among potential trainees and to rise the attractiveness of the professions (e.g. among the professions as butcher and sales agent for which it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new trainees).

Due to the consolidation and automatisisation processes and the closing down and taking over of smaller-scale companies it is expected that job safety and job stability will not characterise the sector in the coming years. From the trade union's perspective it would be wise to introduce a minimum wage in the meat industry in order to improve quality aspects and to prevent the further exploitation of staff.

The current report provides the results of phase 3 and demonstrates the current practices on the recognition of qualifications and competencies in the German meat industry. Two interviews were conducted with trade union experts in the field of vocational education and training in the meat sector.

## 2. Scenarios for the Recognition of Qualifications

The following chapter will define the current practice in the German educational system and the labour market as regards the recognition of professional qualifications of workers in the meat industry.

### 2.1 Educational system

Access requirements for vocational education and training programmes vary considerably in Germany. Some programmes do not require a school degree, which is the case for the training as butcher. However, the large majority of trainees participating in the training has completed secondary education (“Haupt-/Realschule”). The fact that not even one in approx. 13 trainees has dropped out of school, suggests that the chances for people without a school degree are very little, which seems to be reinforced in times where training places are very scarce and highly competed among the youth.

For candidates changing the institution providing the training the German Länder can (after hearing the Länder committees for vocational training) decide through legal regulation that the former education will be credited partially or completely within the training period (BBiG 2005 § 7 (1, 2)). Based on a proposal of the trainee and the trainer the committee can decide upon a potential reduction of the vocational training duration or on the extension if the trainee submits a proposal (BBiG 2005 § 8 (1)).

Unlike the initial vocational education and training, continuing vocational education and training is characterised by a pluralism of providers and a comparatively low degree of regulation by the state, which plays a subsidiary role at most, by voluntary participation and by multi-functionality. The state regulation defines the name of the further training degree, the goal, content and requirements of the examination, the access requirements and the regulations for the final examination.

### 2.2 Labour market

Individuals who have not participated in vocational training but who can demonstrate that they have been working in the profession or in a related field for at least one and a half times the time prescribed for the vocational training duration (usually lastign three years) or individuals who can certify by documents that they are qualified for the activity, can also admitted to take the vocational training exam (admittance to examination in exceptional cases: BBiG 2005 § 45). This means that informal learning acquired through labour market experience is being recognised to a certain degree.

In smaller companies and in the meat handicraft professional experience is still very important and a vocational education and training degree definitely helps to find a job. This is less the case in the meat industry which increasingly hires unskilled or semi-skilled staff. At the same times, the chances to enter employment in a safe position subject to social security are very little in the meat industry, especially in large-scale companies.

### **3. Actors during the recognition process of qualifications in the meat industry**

According to the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz), the Federal Ministry is responsible for the company-based training in the dual system while the Länder Ministries of Education are in charge of the implementation of the training in the vocational schools. The state-approved vocational trainings are designed and adapted based on close cooperation between the Federation, the Länder und the social partners. Vocational training regulations are enacted by the ministries responsible for the profession through a procedure based on consensus with the social partners and in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Representatives of these organisations regularly get together in the Steering Committee meetings of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training BIBB (“Hauptausschuss des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung”) and have an impact on new regulations, on quality aspects and contents of vocational education and training as well as on further training programmes within enterprises.

Special ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health only have a say in if the profession is directly related to their specific mission (e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture for the profession as dairy expert and the Ministry of Health for the profession as veterinarian).

## 4. Acknowledgement of qualifications

The following chapter will identify the procedures of quality recognition and assessment of competencies and qualifications in the educational system and the labour market.

### 4.1 Acknowledgement of qualifications

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the ministries responsible for the profession are in charge of enabling the vocational training regulations through a procedure based on consensus with the social partners and in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

### 4.2 Assessment

Related to the meat sector, the main instruments to recognize qualifications and professional experience in the German vocational education and training system are:

The final exam:

The final exam is undertaken by at the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (in case of professions of the meat industry) and the Chamber of Handicrafts (in case of professions in the meat handcraft, e.g. for the training as butcher).

Application documents:

In order to participate in a vocational education and training programme, candidates must submit application documents composed of a Curriculum Vitae, a letter of motivation as well as certificates and diplomas obtained. In some cases the recruitment procedure also includes an exam or a practical demonstration but this depends on the professions.

Certification:

The documents demonstrating the professional and educational history of the candidates are registered within the enterprises. When the candidate leaves the enterprise, he or she is entitled to be granted a job certificate ("Arbeitszeugnis") in which his or her activities and fields of responsibilities and competencies are described. In Germany, this is one of the key documents in the application folder. Potential new employees use them as a reference to evaluate the experiences and competencies of the candidates. When applying for an position as a trainee or for a job, applicants need to include the following documents:

- a letter of motivation describing his/her competencies in relation to the job profile
- a Curriculum Vitae with a current picture of the candidate with an emphasis on the experiences that are relevant for the job
- School diplomas
- Certificates and diplomas from the educational system (e.g. vocational education and training, further training, language courses if relevant)

## **5. Results of the expert interviews in the field of vocational education and training**

Two interviews were conducted with two experts of the trade union representing employees in the meat sector in Germany, the NGG (“Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten”). The interviews took place on 2 April 2007 and each had an approximate duration of 45 minutes. The candidates were chosen in relation to their position and its relevance for vocational education and training and further training in the meat industry:

- Wolfgang Endling, Head of Division “Meat industry” at NGG
- Joachim Langecker, Head of Division “Vocational Education and Training” at NGG.

The results will be presented in the order of the interview questions to allow for a comparison between the participating countries in the project.

### **5.1 Vocational training situation in the meat industry sector**

#### **What is the situation of vocational education and training in the meat sector?**

As regards the situation of vocational training in the sector the interviewees mentioned that the situation in the German meat industry is very different from that in the meat handicraft. In the former sector, vocational education and training is not offered in the same dimension than in the meat handicraft, even if the infrastructure would be available. However, representative statistical information is lacking here as the backflow of responses from the enterprises is rather low in current investigations.

In 2005, the vocational education and training for the profession as butcher was reorganised and adapted to the changing situation in the labour market. Accordingly, trainees can now select optional qualifications such as meat production, catering and customer service. The new regulation has been enabled by the ministry whereas other key players in the educational system such as the employers’ and employees representatives were consulted. The NGG is in favour of the new training regulations as it makes the training more attractive to potential new trainees.

The image of the profession as butcher is rather bad and there is a lack of candidates applying for a traineeship. Despite the fact that traineeships are scarce, more places are available for the training as butcher than candidates applying. The unfavourable image is especially based on the low remuneration and the demanding work conditions.

#### **What is the success rate of initial training (official training) among the youth?**

In 2005, 8319 persons took part in a vocational education and training programme as butcher. Every year, approximately 3000 persons start with an apprenticeship programme. The drop-out rate lies at approximately 26% (whereas it is 21% among all apprentices). According to the interviewees the reason for the high rate is that the job is physically very demanding; candidates in butcheries also criticise the long opening hours. Approximately half of the drop-outs restart with a new vocational education and training programme. However, it is not clear whether they change the sector or the profession entirely or whether they just start in a new company. Another reason for the

relatively high drop-out rate is that the profession as butcher is not very popular in Germany and that – against the background of the lack of sufficient apprenticeship positions – candidates start with a course even if it is not among their key priorities. In the course of their apprenticeship they may find a more suitable alternative which makes them stop with the vocational training.

The rate of trainees successfully completing the vocational education and training is rather high at 84.8% (2005). The profession is primarily composed of candidates with a secondary school degree (Haupt- or Realschulabschluss) which refers to approx. 90% of the candidates. Only approx. 1.2% have a higher secondary degree (“Abitur”). The rest is composed of candidates who do not have a school diploma and who complete their school degree during the vocational training programme. In fact, the participation in the vocational education and training programme does not require a school degree and in theory, it is open also to school drop-outs.

**How is the training implemented in the companies and in the labour market? Is it possible to identify any change in the field of vocational education and training as to the coming years, especially as regards the introduction of new technologies?**

There is a decrease of training positions in the handicraft sector (approx. 17% from 1991 to today), primarily due to the economic situation and the fusion of enterprises (with medium-sized enterprises becoming affiliated to big-scale enterprises able to offer products for less money and responding to new technological requirements). In respect to recent scandals in the meat industry, quality aspects have become more important and are a fixed aspect in the training of apprentices.

In relation to the requirements to respect and maintain high quality standards in the meat sector, attention is also paid to organic food, which has become an element of the training.

Current discussions of the professions in the meat industry circulate around the new profession “industry butcher” which is favoured by enterprises. However, the NGG is against the introduction of this new profession. According to one of our interviewees, quality demands are not sufficiently respected and the trainees do not learn enough of the products.

## **5.2 Acknowledgement of qualifications**

**What is the value of work experience in the labour market of this sector?**

Both interviewees find that professional experience is very important in the meat handicraft but less so in the meat industry.

In the meat industry many work places are occupied by unskilled persons who have just entered the sector. The training to make them acquainted with their job has an average duration of one or two days, which is not sufficient to guarantee safe work conditions and to ensure high quality standards.

Smaller enterprises in the meat sector are more dependent upon a skilled workforce with profound knowledge of the products. These enterprises can only survive through offering high-quality products, which is why professional experience counts much more than in the meat industry. Also, they have to make sure that their staff is more flexible and can cover more areas of work than in large-scale enterprises.

The interviewees claim that a shift must take place in the meat industry so that more vocational training and education as well as further training and qualification programmes are created and that the training and career chances are improved in the sector.

**How is the worker qualification recognized? How are the selection and recruitment process? Which documents are used in this process (CV, registration form, recommendations, degrees and certificates, ect?)**

The interviewees cannot say anything on the topic recognition of further training and qualification in the meat industry. In the meat handicraft, qualifications are quite very regulated, they are also based on the EU recognition rules in force.

However, it can be mentioned that selection and recruitment processes in Germany are rather standardised compared to other EU countries. In general, the documents used in the application procedure are: a CV, a letter of motivation, school and training diplomas as well as job certificates. In some cases, it is also required to fill in a registration form.

**Is there any specific accreditation of the sector which allows the labour mobility, the access to the training courses, ect.?**

Against the background of the pricing pressure and the rise of large-scale enterprises in the German meat industry the employment structure has changed considerably. Less persons have a permanent contract and there is the tendency to recruit temporary employees and unskilled staff.

**Is there any company which has a related practice?**

Successfully completed vocational education and training programmes are accredited by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (in case of professions in the meat industry) and by the Chamber of Handicraft (in case of professions in the handicraft), respectively.

**Do you know any research or project which be developed in this sense?**

A recent research project on the topic "Future of the Meat Industry" was carried out by NGG and the Böckler Stiftung ("Zukunft der Fleischwirtschaft"). In February 2007 the final conference was organised (the conference speeches and a conference report are downloadable at:

[http://www.bzo.de/data\\_de/downloads\\_und\\_seminarmaterialien/downloads/Seminarmaterialien/11\\_Fleischkonferenz2007/Vortrag.Maack.Fleisch2007.pdf](http://www.bzo.de/data_de/downloads_und_seminarmaterialien/downloads/Seminarmaterialien/11_Fleischkonferenz2007/Vortrag.Maack.Fleisch2007.pdf)).

### 5.3 Need of a national and an international report of Recognition and accreditation

#### **Do you consider needed that it should be a competences licence which makes easy the mobility and the access to the vocational training?**

One of the interviewees is in favour of a competences licence as it makes the profiles of the candidates more transparent and improves the comparability of degrees. However, the efficiency of such a license depends to a large degree on the fact if the terms used are understandable and if the candidates are able to communicate the contents to their potential future employers.

For the second interviewee, a competences licence would also be of added value as it contributes to reliable standards in the EU. However, if the meat industry continues to offer unfavourable and precarious work conditions and if the principle of wage and social dumping continues to rule, these documents will not have the desired impact in the recruitment processes and individuals do not gain much from them.

For both interviewees it is very important to describe the body in charge of delivering the competences licence.

#### **Do you consider that a model as the Europass will be useful for the companies? Why? (reasons)**

- Labour mobility in the enterprise and in the sector
- Personal selection by Qualifications visibility
- Labour promotion
- Training access
- Quality certification
- Quality improvement
- Others

One of the interviewees finds that the question must also include the aspect of the usefulness of the Europass for the employees (not only for the companies). Both interviewees find that in general, the Europass is a useful tool to make the European training and employment systems more transparent. In Germany, there is no need to introduce further transparency tools as they already exist due to a rather standardised recruitment procedure already in force. Also, the Europass may be less important in the meat industry than in other sectors in which mobility is more important (e.g. tourism). It is useful as it allows for more transparency of degrees and competencies and as it also documents informally acquired competencies besides the competencies and skills obtained within the formal school and training system.

One of the interviewees stresses that it must be ensured that if it is being identified that the individual still lacks specific competencies, training and qualification opportunities must be created to fill these gaps and to give the individual the chance of developing his skills further. In the current employment market, this is still pending as many companies do not offer qualification and further training.

As to the aspect of quality improvement one of the interviewees finds that the Europass does not lead to quality improvement as it solely documents the experiences, competencies and skills of an individual.

**Do you consider a model similar to the Europass would be useful for workers?**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Labour mobility in the enterprise and in the sector |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Personal selection by Qualifications visibility     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Labour promotion                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Training access                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Quality certification                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Quality improvement                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Others  |

**If a model of competences license in the sector will be used, which of the following elements do you consider important?**

1. Personal data: name, age, gender, place of birth, residence.

When providing personal data it must be ensured that the individuals are not discriminated due to the data. One of the interviewees thinks that the place of residence should be revealed but the place of birth is more problematic

2. Name of the organisation who issue the document: trade union, business organisation, training centre, public authorities, private companies, employment agencies, ect.

It must be guaranteed that the document is not issued by one single organisation but by a committee which is equally represented by the stakeholders (social partners, public authorities, labour market organisations). Certification must be regarded as a public interest, which is why a regulation purely under privat law would be problematic.

3. Labour experience-labour path: enterprises where it's been working, jobs, responsibilities, workers in charge, seniority.

The document should include experience, contents and activities in the vocational education and training system, the further training system and the labour market as well as informally acquired competencies and skills. Furthermore, as competencies are related to the structure in which they have been acquired, it is equally important to include information on the location where the training took place, thus, to guarantee that the focus of the document is not solely outcome-based but also input-oriented.

4. Training courses carried out: academic studies achieved, training courses at job, computer skills, languages courses, seminars participation, ect.

Please refer to the answer given to question 3

5. Profesional competences acquired:
6. Technician profesional competences

- Languages competences
- Computer competences
- Environmental competences
- Labour risk prevention competences
- Social Skills and competences acquired: working in a team, flexibility, self-control, interpersonal understanding, selfconfidence, results guidance:  
According to the interviewees, social skills should be included only if the candidate is not explicitly or implicitly discriminated by the notions.

**Which type of organisation should promote a competence licence in the meat industry?**

- Social partners
- Enterprises
- Public administrations: educational authorities, labour authority, health authority, others.  
All of the above actors, although social dialogue linked to the collective agreement
- Others:

The licence should be promoted by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chambers of Handicraft, respectively. It would not be wise if solely enterprises gave out the licence as they tend to emphasise their own interests and cannot give a licence valid for the entire sector.

**Do you consider the following steps to carry out a qualifications recognition process in the sector necessary?**

- Identification of the enterprises and types of enterprises
- Working posts classification  
It is especially important to include information about the learning place as this allows conclusions about.
- Description of needed competences for the sector  
Yes, if these are determined by a committee composed of the key stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training.
- Detail of the related training to obtain the competences
- Definition of the qualification Recognition process
- Identification of the staff who will assess and carry out the qualification identification process
- List of the certificates, experiences, previous evidences which will have them in count

## 6. Conclusion

In line with the results of phase 2, the findings of phase 3 demonstrates the difficulties for people nowadays willing to enter the meat industry either as trainee or as employee. While training places in the meat industry are scarce, employment chances are equally low in the sector, which increasingly seems to offer precarious work situations, building on cheap workforce in order to meet the market requirements.

It was found that in principle, instruments to acknowledge competencies and qualifications are a useful tool if they consider both the employees' and the employers' perspectives and if they are composed of terms and phrases that are understandable to both sides.

However, training and qualification opportunities should be tailored to the training requirements and should fill the gaps of competencies of trainees/employees. Competences models and instruments could help detecting these requirements and gaps. Still, there seems to be a wide gap between the current practices – in which training and qualification is offered only seldom – and the training structures needed.

## List of abbreviations

BBiG	Berufsbildungsgesetz (vocational training act) in force for whole German
bfw	Berufsfortbildungswerk des DGB GmbH (institute for vocational and advanced training)
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training in Germany)
NGG	Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (trade union for nutrition, consumption and gastronomy)

## References

- „Branchenspezifisches Informationssystem zur betrieblichen Qualifikationsentwicklung unter Nutzung der Netzwerke der Wirtschaft“ (English translation: „Sector-specific information system on the development of professional qualification and the use of networks in the industry“), Forschungsinstitut für Berufsbildung im Handwerk, University of Köln.
- Research project „Zukunft der Fleischwirtschaft“ („Future of the Meat Industry“), NGG and Hans Böckler Stiftung. Results of the final meeting of the project, downloadable at:  
[http://www.bzo.de/data\\_de/downloads\\_und\\_seminarmaterialien/downloads/Downloads/Fleischkonferenz.pdf](http://www.bzo.de/data_de/downloads_und_seminarmaterialien/downloads/Downloads/Fleischkonferenz.pdf)

## Interview files

<b>Euomeat: interview file</b>	
<b>Country</b>	Germany
<b>Name of the interviewed person</b>	Wolfgang Endling
<b>Organization</b>	Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (NGG)
<b>Position</b>	Head of Division "Meat industry"
<b>Date and place of the interview</b>	2 April 2007, Heidelberg
<b>Curriculum of the interviewed person</b>	Will be sent to IFES in week 16
<b>Reason which the person has been selected because of</b>	His competencies in the field of the employment structure in the German meat industry
<b>Name of the interviewer</b>	Tanja Kreetz
<b>Signature of the interviewed person.</b>	Not applicable as the interview was organised as a telephone interview

<b>Euomeat: interview file</b>	
<b>Country</b>	Germany
<b>Name of the interviewed person</b>	Joachim Langecker
<b>Organization</b>	Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (NGG)
<b>Position</b>	Head of Division "Vocational Education and Training"
<b>Date and place of the interview</b>	2 April 2007
<b>Curriculum of the interviewed person</b>	Will be sent to IFES in week 16
<b>Reason which the person has been selected because of</b>	His competencies in the field of the vocational education and training situation in the German meat industry
<b>Name of the interviewer</b>	Tanja Kreetz
<b>Signature of the interviewed person.</b>	Not applicable as the interview was organised as a telephone interview