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Project Title: Job Orientation – Better Fit (JOB)

Project Number: 2024-1-DE02-KA210-VET-000249253

Requirements of companies - Report

Job Orientation – Better fit: The project

This report on requirements of companies in relation to their applicants is the first milestone of the Erasmus+ project 'Job Orientation - Better fit' (JOB). JOB aims to prevent training drop-outs by improving the match between applicants' professional interests and companies' actual requirements/expectations of applicants.

Therefore the results listed in this report form the basis for further project work. The project as a whole focuses on enhancing career guidance, providing support for tailored recruitment and also incorporating the important onboarding phase into the overall process. Methodologies and materials are being developed to support companies in finding suitable applicants and retaining them in their organisations. Companies are able to implement these simple tools easily.

In the Erasmus+ project 'Job Orientation - Better fit', a total of five partners from four countries are working together in a joint, transnational exchange of experience to identify challenges as early as possible and adapt the onboarding process in a targeted manner. The project partners are vocational training centres, vocational schools, chambers and vocational training experts from Germany, Italy, Spain and Greece.

Regarding the recruitment of young skilled workers and apprentices all project partners face the same challenges in their resp. countries:

- The shortage of skilled workers and the difficulties to attract young people is a problem for all
- In VETcenters it has to be focused more on digital skills
- Key trends have to be included as e.g. to attract more women in construction

This can only be achieved by prioritising the individual needs of all those involved in the employment of young skilled workers. The requirements of companies in terms of knowledge, competences and soft skills are the starting point for this improvement.



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The report describes the similarities and differences between the countries with regard to the needs for apprentices and applicants. Each country researched the relevant channels in the respective country. The following categories were defined for the research:

- Technical up-to-date skills
- Digital skills
- Language skills
- Basic social competences (e.g. communication)
- Safety regulations
- Motivation
- Loyalty

A wide range of different channels were used by the project partners to obtain a concrete picture of the companies' expectations with regard to the applicants' skills. They ranged from reports from the European Centre for Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), Statistics Offices, chambers, specific websites on Human resources, Federal Employment agency and above all job adverts.

Here the list of channels used by the individual partners:

- CEDEFOP (Greece, Germany)
- Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italy)
- Job adverts in special job adverts portals (Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain)
- Strategy for labor force Upskilling and connection to the labor market – Public employment service (DYPA) (Greece)
- Statistical data of seven chambers of crafts and skilled trades in the region North-Rhine Westphalia (Germany)
- Framework curriculum for vocational training in building construction professions (Germany)
- Chambers of Commerce (Italy, Germany)
- Websites on Human resources (Italy)
- Information from the Federal Employment Agency on the requirements in the building trades as well as the Job adverts portal of the Federal Employment Agency (Germany)



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The focus of the research was on construction occupations. In Germany, adverts for car mechatronics / car mechanics were used as a (small) comparison group. The results of these two groups – construction and car mechatronics/car mechanics for non-occupation-specific skills and soft skills are similar.

Requirements of Companies in the various countries

Germany

A publication by the German Federal Employment Agency from 2006 summarises the requirements that companies generally expect from young people leaving school. These are defined as the so-called Apprenticeship entry maturity which includes certain school-related basic knowledge (e.g. writing, reading and dealing with texts and media, basic economic knowledge), psychological performance characteristics (e.g. logical thinking and ability to maintain sustained attention), physical characteristics (e.g. age-appropriate developmental level and health), psychological characteristics of work behaviour and personality (e.g. communication skills, perseverance and frustration tolerance), as well as career eligibility (e.g. self-assessment and information competence),

In Germany, the construction industry consists of various professions. For the following report, the requirements of construction companies regarding vocational training as a building construction worker (duration: 2 years) with additional training to become a bricklayer (duration: 1 year) were analysed as examples. Usually, companies expect that young people intending to do an apprenticeship have a secondary school leaving certificate and a German language level of at least B1, although preferably B2, which is usually only relevant for foreigners. Young people under the age of 18 must present a medical certificate of an initial medical examination.

According to the German Federal Employment Agency, there are also certain school subjects whose knowledge provides a good basis for successful vocational training - and on which companies may therefore focus in particular during the hiring process. These are Maths (determining building material requirements, calculating areas and creating the necessary measurements require a good knowledge of math), craftsmanship/technical skills (experience in the field of crafts and technical skills makes it easier to work with tools, machines and equipment on construction sites during training) and Physics (aspiring bricklayers need knowledge of physics in order to be able to correctly assess the properties of materials and the effect of forces and types of leverage).

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The Federal Employment Agency also provides a list of the skills required to successfully learn or practice the profession: Just about average general intellectual ability, barely average figurative-spatial thinking (e.g. working according to plans and drawings), eye-hand coordination (e.g. laying ceiling beams), body control (e.g. working on ladders and scaffolding), manual dexterity (e.g. handling tools, construction machinery and equipment), calculation skills (e.g. performing calculations of building material requirements).

In addition to the soft skills already mentioned above, which are already taken into account in the application process itself, the Federal Employment Agency lists the following soft skills that companies expect from aspiring bricklayers with regard to work and social behaviour: Honesty, critical faculties and appropriate manners, willingness to perform and commitment (e.g. willing and energetic completion of particularly physically demanding work on the construction site), diligence (e.g. precise work with spirit level), independent working style (e.g. independently recognizing and completing tasks during bricklaying), prudence (e.g. observing the safety of colleagues and passers-by when working on scaffolding, lifting platforms and ladders), flexibility (e.g. constantly adapting to changing working conditions when changing construction sites) and the ability to work in a team (e.g. working together with other skilled workers when concreting the foundation).

Usually, companies demand that their employees fulfil certain physical conditions so that they can meet the requirements of daily work and ensure safety on construction sites. However, these are not standardised, but differ from company to company. These include: Resilience of the spine, legs, arms and hands (e.g. kneeling, squatting or working in a bent position with vibrating drills), physical strength (e.g. lifting heavy materials such as bricks) and stamina (e.g. carrying out demolition and chiselling work), robust health (e.g. working outdoors or in building shells in draughts, rain, cold or summer heat), functioning arms and hands (e.g. building brickwork), sufficient coordination of movement (e.g. assembling prefabricated components on ladders), freedom from vertigo (e.g. risk of falling on high ladders), spatial vision (e.g. reading and implementing construction plans), healthy, resistant skin on hands and arms (e.g. handling cement, lime; working in strong sunlight in summer), healthy respiratory tract and lungs (e.g. working with smoke, building dust, gases or vapors from chemical building materials) and a resilient cardiovascular system (e.g. performing physically demanding activities).

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In order to compare these requirements with practical situations, the responsible partner analysed what skills are taught during vocational training based on the German Framework curriculum for vocational training in building construction professions. Among these are the promotion of the following overarching competences across all learning fields:

- Use information and communication systems and digital media in a targeted manner, taking into account the regulations on data protection and data security with regard to the digitalization of work and business processes,
- cooperate with other people within and outside the company and across disciplines, taking into account intercultural differences and inclusion, and communicate in an appropriate manner,
- communicate with all parties involved in a project in professional and technical language,
- apply mathematical, physical and technical facts,
- use machines, materials and energy in accordance with economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability and
- implement regulations and measures for occupational safety, health and environmental protection.

In order to draw conclusions about what companies require from trainees in their second year of training and/or from skilled workers, the technical content that trainees should learn in their first year of training was also analysed. Among these are:

- Taking on work assignments and customer-oriented communication
- Planning, preparing and organizing work tasks
- Setting up, securing, maintaining and clearing construction sites
- Operating and maintaining tools, machines and equipment
- Testing, storing and selecting building materials and building supplies
- Reading and using analog and digital plans and drawings, making sketches, also digitally

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- Carrying out measurements using both analog and digital measuring devices
- Carrying out energy efficiency measures as well as noise and fire protection measures in and on buildings and components
- and the production of various building materials (e.g. concrete, plasters, screeds, drywall construction components).

To summarise, the research shows that construction companies require key knowledge, skills, and soft skills: **Knowledge:** Besides sufficient German language skills, applicants are expected to have a solid foundation in mathematics, physics, and technical skills, as these subjects are essential for calculations, material assessments, and working with tools and machinery.

Skills: Technical competencies include operating tools and machinery, reading and interpreting construction plans, conducting measurements, handling building materials, and implementing safety and sustainability measures.

Soft Skills: Companies value reliability, teamwork, flexibility, willingness to work and to learn. Physical fitness, stamina and coordination are also important due to the demanding nature of construction work.

Spain

In Spain, the construction sector is pivotal to the nation's economic development, offering substantial employment opportunities. Yet, the industry faces challenges such as an aging workforce and a shortage of qualified professionals. To address these issues, there is an ongoing effort to define the essential requirements for professionals and apprentices entering the construction sector. These requirements encompass educational qualifications, technical skills, soft skills, and digital competencies ensuring that the workforce is equipped to meet the evolving demands of the industry.

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Most Requested Skills for Professionals and Apprentices in Spain's construction Sector 2023:

- Building Information Modeling (BIM) for project planning
- Proficiency in AutoCAD and Revit for 3D design
- Use of VR and drones for construction site monitoring
- Spatial visualization and understanding of construction drawings
- Heavy machinery operation techniques
- Sustainability knowledge (LEED or BREEAM certifications)
- Plumbing, painting, and energy efficiency in buildings
- Communication and teamwork skills

To qualify for technical roles in Spain, candidates must meet certain educational and certification requirements. A degree from a Vocational Education and Training (VET) provides a strong foundation in technical subjects. Licenses and certifications are necessary, depending on the role, with vocational training becoming increasingly valued, particularly in trades and construction sectors.

Educational Requirements and Certifications

- **Vocational Education and Training (VET):** Offered for various levels
 - Basic VET (Formación Profesional Básica - FPB)
 - Intermediate VET (Grado Medio)
 - Advanced VET (Grado Superior)
- **Specialized Courses:** Subsidized programs for individuals aged 16-25, focusing on areas such as:
 - Plumbing
 - Painting
 - New technologies applied to energy efficiency in buildings
 -
- **Licenses and Certifications:**
 - Heavy machinery operation licenses
 - LEED or BREEAM certifications for sustainability practices



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Employers in Spain focused not only on technical but also soft skills.

Desired qualifications include:

a. Technical Skills

Machinery Operation: Proficiency in operating heavy machinery is essential for many roles.

Understanding of Construction Drawings: Ability to read and interpret blueprints and technical drawings.

Sustainability Certifications: Knowledge of sustainable building practices, evidenced by certifications like LEED or BREEAM as mentioned above.

b. Digital Competencies

Digital competencies are essential in construction as they streamline project planning, enhance collaboration, and improve safety through advanced tools like BIM, AutoCAD, and VR. The most significant digital competencies required by employers are:

- **Building Information Modeling (BIM):** For project planning and management.
- **Software Proficiency:** Software such as AutoCAD and Revit for 3D design and modeling.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Virtual reality (VR) tools and drone usage for site and project inspections.
- **Spatial Visualization:** Ability to visualize projects in three dimensions.



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c. Soft Skills

Soft skills have become as important as technical skills. Many job descriptions, including those for low-skilled employment, include skills such as excellent communication and adaptability.

- Communication: Clear and effective interaction with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders.
- Adaptability and Flexibility: Capacity to adjust to changing circumstances and work under pressure.
- Problem-Solving: Analytical skills to identify issues and develop effective solutions.
- Time Management: Efficiently managing time to meet project deadlines.

Most Demanded Profiles in the Construction Sector

- Construction Technician: Ensuring compliance with plans and regulations.
- Structural Assembly Technician: Specializing in assembling structural components of buildings.
- Air-Conditioning and Plumbing Installation Technician: Installing and maintaining HVAC and plumbing systems.
- Energy Rehabilitation and Efficiency Technician: Focusing on improving energy efficiency in buildings and implementing rehabilitation projects.

Research Channels Used

By aligning educational pathways with the evolving demands of the construction industry, Spain aims to equip its workforce with the necessary skills and competencies to thrive in this vital sector.

The data in this report was gathered from various sources, including:

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Italy

1. Technical and Up-to-Date Skills

In Italy, the demand for technical and up-to-date skills is growing rapidly, particularly in the construction sector. According to Confindustria's 2024 labor market survey, 69.2% of companies report difficulty in finding candidates with necessary technical competencies. This challenge is especially pronounced for roles that require advanced digital and technical expertise, particularly in industries undergoing digital and sustainable transitions.

Key Technical Skills for Handworkers:

- **Use of Tools, Equipment, and Techniques:** Mastery in operating modern construction tools and equipment is essential.
- **Knowledge of Building Materials:** Understanding the properties, applications, and handling of various building materials.
- **Adherence to Safety Regulations:** Compliance with safety standards to ensure secure working environments.
- **Physical Fitness and Stamina:** The physical capability to handle the demanding nature of construction work.



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A study by Randstad Research, which analyzed 5.4 million job listings between 2019 and 2023, emphasizes the critical role of technical skills across multiple industries, including construction.

2. Digital Skills

The demand for digital skills is rapidly increasing. The annual bulletin of the Excelsior information system highlights that 3.5 million positions in 2024 require technical and digital skills, forming a significant portion of the 5.5 million planned hires.

Digital Adoption in Construction Companies:

- 52% of construction companies utilize digital solutions to improve efficiency and competitiveness.
- Tools such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), project management software, and drone detection technologies are becoming standard.

Digital Skills Required for General Companies:

- **Basic Digital Skills:** Proficiency in using digital tools for communication (64% of hires).
- **Mathematical and Computer Skills:** Use of mathematical and computational methods (51.9% of positions).
- **Management of Innovative Solutions:** Ability to manage advanced technologies (37.5% of hires).
- **Programming and Software Development:** High demand for programmers, web technicians, and application experts.
- **Engineering and Design:** Roles for electronic, telecommunications, energy, and mechanical engineers.



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Digital Skills Required for Construction Companies:

- **BIM Expertise:** Proficiency in Autodesk Revit and ArchiCAD for project design and management.
- **Data Management and Analysis:** Competence in managing project data and improving workflow efficiency.
- **Surveying Technologies:** Ability to operate drones for site monitoring and surveying.
- **Project Management Software:** Familiarity with dedicated tools.
- **Cybersecurity:** Protecting project data and sensitive information.

3. Language Skills

Finding precise data on language requirements in construction jobs can be challenging, but some insights are available:

General Language Requirements:

- Over 200 construction-related job listings in Italy as of December 2024.
- Approximately 13,110 job openings require English proficiency.
- English is particularly needed for roles such as project managers, engineers, and quality controllers.

Language Demand Breakdown:

1. **English:** Required in approximately 86,785 job offers.
2. **German:** Needed in about 21,350 job listings.
3. **French:** Found in 13,493 job offers.
4. **Spanish:** Required for approximately 10,142 positions.
5. **Korean:** Although less common, needed in 6,700 job listings with higher salaries.



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4. Soft Skills

Soft skills are becoming increasingly important in Italy's job market, with demand expected to rise by 22% by 2030.

General Soft Skills:

1. **Problem-Solving:** Crucial for creative and effective solutions.
2. **Creativity:** Valued for proposing innovative ideas.
3. **Communication Skills:** Essential for clear and persuasive interactions.
4. **Time Management:** Necessary for meeting deadlines efficiently.
5. **Teamwork:** Important for collaborative environments.
6. **Critical Thinking:** Key for rational decision-making.
7. **Adaptability:** Required for adjusting to changing scenarios.
8. **Leadership:** Needed for guiding teams.
9. **Stress Management:** Essential for maintaining productivity.
10. **Emotional Intelligence:** Important for improving interpersonal relationships.

Soft Skills in Construction:

1. **Problem-Solving:** Critical for overcoming project challenges.
2. **Communication:** Essential for coordination among stakeholders.
3. **Teamwork:** Vital for achieving project goals.
4. **Time Management:** Necessary for adhering to deadlines.
5. **Adaptability:** Important for adjusting to evolving project requirements.
6. **Leadership:** Needed for effective team and resource management.
7. **Attention to Detail:** Ensures accuracy and quality.
8. **Stress Management:** Helps maintain productivity in high-pressure environments.



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5. Safety Regulations

Safety regulations play a crucial role in the construction sector.

- **General Companies:** Approximately 226,000 job vacancies require health and safety competencies.
- **Construction Sector:** Over 200 job listings emphasize safety regulation knowledge. Positions include construction managers, safety officers, and project managers.

6. Motivation and Loyalty

Motivation

Motivation, though often implicit, is a highly valued trait:

- **General Companies:** Of the 5.5 million hiring contracts planned for 2024, motivation is expected across all roles.
- **Construction Sector:** Over 200 job listings highlight the need for motivated individuals.

Loyalty

Loyalty and long-term commitment are essential in the job market:

- **General Companies:** Approximately 1.2 million job openings stress loyalty.
- **Construction Sector:** Around 150 job listings emphasize loyalty for roles such as project managers and site supervisors.

7. Other Industry Insights

- The construction sector experienced a 5% increase in employment in 2023, with about 30,000 new hires.
- State incentives like the Superbonus significantly boosted labor demand.
- In Q3 2024, the number of employed in the construction sector increased by 117,000 units compared to the previous quarter, marking a 0.5% growth.



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Greece

This section serves as an overview of the essential requirements for professionals/ apprentices in the construction sector, including technical skills, language skills, knowledge, soft skills and digital competencies for Greece. It is worth noting that there is limited information available about the specific requirements for apprenticeships, as most apprentices typically come from Vocational and Educational Training (VET) schools. Moreover, up-to-date statistical data specifically related to Greece's construction sector apprentices is limited.

Most requested skills based on online job advertisements in Greece in construction workers in 2023:

- Accessing and analyzing digital data
- Solving problems
- Driving vehicles
- Organizing, planning and scheduling work and activities
- Promoting, selling and purchasing
- Working with others
- Providing information and support to the public and clients
- Installing, maintaining and repairing mechanical equipment

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To qualify for technical roles in Greece, candidates must meet certain educational and certification requirements. A degree from a Technical Educational Institute or Technical School provides a strong foundation in technical subjects. Licenses and certifications are often necessary, depending on the role, with vocational training becoming increasingly valued, particularly in trades and construction sectors.

Employers often search for candidates who have additional technical expertise and relevant work experience.

Required Skills and Competences

- Technical Experience - Hands-on experience with relevant machinery or systems enhances employability.
- Work Experience - Previous employment in a similar role is essential

Employers in Greece focused not only on technical but also soft skills.

Desired qualifications include:

a. Technical Skills including the following:

Machinery Operation License: Essential for roles requiring hands-on work with heavy equipment.

Crane Operation License: Mandatory for jobs involving lifting and transportation of heavy loads.

Driving License: Required in many jobs' descriptions

Completed Military Obligations: In many jobs, it is a requirement for male candidates to have completed their mandatory military obligation

Knowledge of CAD Software (e.g., AutoCAD): Essential for engineering roles, not essential for workers in the field

Project Management Tools: Familiarity with planning and execution tools is a plus.

Knowledge of English: A necessity in many multinational firms and industries.

Understanding of Regulations and Safety Standards: Crucial for compliance with industry norms.

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b. Soft Skills

Soft skills have become as important as technical skills. Many job descriptions, including those for low-skilled employment, include skills such as excellent communication and adaptability. The most significant soft skills required by employers are:

- Communication - Clear and effective interaction with colleagues and clients
- Flexibility - Ability to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges.
- Learning to Learn - Willingness to continuously acquire new knowledge and skills.
- Teamwork - Ability to collaborate with different teams.
- Taking Initiative - Proactive approach and decision-making.
- Time management
- Ability to work under pressure
- Problem Solving: Ability to analyze challenges and develop effective solutions.

Research Channels Used

The data in this report was gathered from various sources, including:

- Career sections of large construction companies in Greece, such as:
 - GEK TERNA Group
 - Ellaktor Group
 - Avax Group
 - Intrakat
- Cedefop Skills Intelligence Tool: [<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools>]
- <https://gr.jooble.org/%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B1-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%AD%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%87%CE%BD%CE%AF%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82>



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Project Title: Job Orientation – Better Fit (JOB)

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Requirements of companies - Report

Results - Similarities in the different countries

With regard to the similarities between the different countries, the following requirements of companies were identified:

Companies require their employees to have manual skills and job-related specific competences, e.g. to be able to operate tools, machines and equipment correctly and safely. Another occupation-related aspect involves technical skills, which are required in all countries, but which differ in terms of the requirements/training content of the occupations in the individual countries. In Greece, for example, analysing digital data is important, while the German framework curriculum for vocational training in the construction professions envisages that the use of digital media in consideration of the regulations on data protection and data security must be acquired as an overarching skill.

Physical fitness and stamina also matter, for instance to be able to lift heavy materials such as bricks or carry out demolition and chiselling work properly.

In order to be able to work correctly and safely on construction sites, trainees and skilled workers must possess a good knowledge of the respective national language in all countries. In Italy, it is even mandatory that skilled workers have to be able to understand working and safety instructions.

This is even more important as teamwork is one of the soft skills that is considered important in all countries. In addition, Greek, German, Italian and Spanish companies expect willingness to work and willingness to learn. Other important soft skills identified in all countries are reliability and flexibility, for example being able to constantly adapt to changing working conditions when changing construction sites.

Results – Differences

Due to different types of schools and different duration of training in the various countries, the knowledge level is different. More details on this topic can be found in the country reports (p. 3 to 15).

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Knowledge of safety regulations and behaviour is important in Italy, Greece and Spain. In Germany trainees are expected to be aware of dangers. Safety regulations are part of their training. When looking for construction workers, this knowledge is not explicitly mentioned. Finally in Germany, as in Greece and Spain, it is important to have a driving licence.

It is interesting to note that despite the importance of BIM (Building Information Management) in construction, digital skills are surprisingly not required of skilled workers in all countries. For example research in Italy has shown that knowledge of BIM is required for engineers and architects. The reason for this could therefore be that BIM is standard for managers, but not (yet) for skilled workers.

With regard to technical skills, it has already been pointed out above that the required job-related competences are different. There are also differences with regard to spatial visualisation, an important skill in the construction industry. In Spain understanding of construction drawings is requested. In Italy and Greece, applicants have difficulties reading the design. In Germany spatial visualisation is important for trainees. For skilled workers, this skill is only mentioned to a very small extent in the job advertisements. This may be due to the fact that attention was already paid to this point during the selection of trainees.

Language skills beyond the own national language are only required in Greece (English). Other skills such as organisation and planning, creativity are only important in Greece and Italy.

In terms of social skills, there are more similarities between the countries than differences. Only four points of difference were identified: Accuracy, Personal initiative, Communication skills and Problem Solving. Accuracy is important in Italy, Greece and Germany, but not in Spain. Personal initiative is required in Greece, Germany and Spain. The exception here is Italy. Germany is the exception when it comes to problem solving as well as when it comes to communication skills. Communication skills are not emphasised in this country but are important in Italy, Spain and Greece.



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Requirements of companies - Report

Conclusion

To summarize, a clear picture emerges: the requirements for specialist knowledge and technical skills differ in the project partners' countries to some extent. This can be attributed to the different training paths and training periods or, as far as technical skills are concerned, to the different job-related competences. A good example is the difference between the requirements of German apprenticeship applicants in the construction industry and for car mechatronics. The results for the non-occupation-specific competences are similar, as are the social competences. There is also greater agreement than differences between the countries for social skills.

Overall, the following skills are similar in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain:

Manual skills and job related specific competences combined with physical fitness and stamina to be able to carry out the profession properly. Furthermore, companies require good knowledge of the local language as well as willingness to work, willingness to learn, flexibility, reliability and the ability to work in a team.

The next step is to use this common basis, the similar skills identified, to develop a methodology that can be used to match the skills of the applicants to the requirements of the companies.



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