



SCENARIOS REPORT - PORTUGAL

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Glossary

Acordo para Formação Profissional e as Qualificações – Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications (AVTQ)

Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e Ensino Profissional – National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP)

Associação dos Industriais Metalúrgicos, Metalomecânicos e Afins de Portugal – The Association of Metallurgical, Metalworking and Related Industries (AIMMAP)

Associação Nacional das Empresas Metalúrgicas e Eletromecânicas – The National Association of the Metallurgical and Electromechanics Companies (ANEME)

Centro de Formação para a Indústria Metalurgia e Metalomecânica – Training Centre for Metallurgical and Electromechanics (CENFIM)

Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem – The National Commission for the Apprenticeship (CNA)

Comissão Permanente de Concertação Social – Permanent Commission for Social Concertation (CPCS)

Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses – General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers – (CGTP-In)

Federação Nacional da Educação – National Federation of Education (FNE)

Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional – Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP)

Plano de Recuperação e Resiliência 2020-2030 – National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2020-2030 (PRR).

Quadro de Referência Europeu de garantia da Qualidade para o Ensino e Formação Profissional – European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

Quadro Europeu para a Aprendizagem Eficaz e de Qualidade – European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA)

Sistema Nacional de Antecipação das Qualificações – National Qualification Anticipation System (SANQ)

União Geral de Trabalhadores – General Union of Workers (UGT)

1. Introduction

The involvement of social partners and stakeholders has always been a reference in the European strategies and guidelines for the Education and Training systems to guarantee the effectiveness of VET systems. Likewise, the participation of social partners in the development of Portuguese VET was considered crucial. Since 1986, it has involved different frameworks of social partners on a contractual base with the Ministry of Labour and of Education (Peliz, M. et al., 2021).

In Portugal, the involvement of social partners in the governance of Apprenticeship is statutory regulated. Within the Professional Training Policy Agreement signed in 1991, the role of social partners both as beneficiaries and providers of VET was legally defined through the Decree-Law 405/91 of 16 October. As defined in this Law, CVET and IVET are to be provided by the social partners represented in the Standing Committee for Social Dialogue (CPCS). These partners should also contribute to the definition of VET policies, by participating not only as stakeholders but also as coordinators in the governance structures of the National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Training (ANQEP) and of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), where they should tackle issues of the Apprenticeship System (Peliz, M. et. al., 2021).

The desk research shows that is difficult to conclude whether governance of Apprenticeship has been effective. The fieldwork indicated a lack of an effective involvement of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship at political and technical strategic level. Organisationally, their voices are heard, mainly in the CPCS, but policymaking and the decision process is centralised in the government and its structures (regulatory agencies). An expert in the Portuguese VET system stated that:

‘What exists in Portugal regarding the involvement of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship system is a simulacrum of participation’

In the meantime, the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications signed by social partners with a seat in the CPCS), on the 28 of July 2021¹, introduced another perspective in the overall findings. Within the framework of this Agreement, social partners are to be more involved in the governance structures of the Apprenticeship at various levels.

Apprenticeships have been constantly a policy priority in VET at the European level, from the Bruges communiqué (2010) to the Osnabrück declaration (2020), leading almost all EU Member States to engage in actions of reforming existing apprenticeship schemes or introducing new ones. Different purposes have been associated with this policy tool: to provide full vocational training, to address short-term skills development, to promote social inclusion, and to create a safety net for VET dropouts (Cedefop, 2021).

However, according to the workshop participants and the experts' opinions, the Apprenticeship system in Portugal is a residual (marginal) training path of VET. Its expansion is, thus, conditioned by a set of features, namely:

i) *Number of students attending the programme*

Students in the Apprenticeship have had a small decrease between 2014/15 and 2019/20 (see table 1).

¹ The New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3D%3DBQAAAB%2BLCAAAAAAABAAzNDKwMAMA85oP%2FAUAAAA%3D>; Acordo “Formação Profissional e Qualificação: Um Desígnio Estratégico para as Pessoas, para as Empresas e para o País” <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=acordo-de-formacao-profissional-e-qualificacao-assinado-entre-governo-e-parceiros-sociais>

Table 1. Young students enrolled in upper secondary Vocational Education and Training programmes in Portugal

	2014/15	%	2015/16	%	2016/17	%	2017/18	%	2018/19	%	2019/20	%	Average Annual Growth Rate
Apprenticeship	33 030	21%	26 010	18%	24 202	15%	21 869	15%	20 860	15%	20 674	15%	1,2%
Total VET	154 476	43%	148 068	41%	147 569	41%	143 895	41%	140 846	40%	137 454	39%	-0,3%
Total upper secondary	360 787		356 868		357 722		350 958		351 233		350 627		0,2%

Source: Statistics of Education, DGEEC

In the last 6 school years, while maintaining a positive annual average growth (1,2%), the Apprenticeship system has been representing 15% of the students enrolled in school based vocational education and training (VET) programmes since 2016/17. In the interview with the same expert in the Portuguese VET system he stated that:

‘The Apprenticeship remains a marginal offer. This has nothing to do with the quality of the training but with the possibility of expansion’.

ii) Participation and evaluation of the system.

The social partners ‘participation and evaluation of the system has been weak. The lack of information on indicators to measure the performance of the system is a strong constraint to their active participation in the monitoring of the Apprenticeship system. It hinders the creation of knowledge that enables an evaluation of the system itself and conditions its success or failure

This information (e.g. certification rates, attendance indicators, employability rates) was asked several times by social partners in the meetings of the board of directors of IEFPP, but it was never provided. This issue was addressed by trade unions in the workshop, as one of the main difficulties to social partners proactive involvement in the governance of the Apprenticeship system. According to one trade unionist:

‘Our participation is always reactive given the lack of information we have on the management of the system, and the IEFPP does not provide it’.

Furthermore, an expert interviewed indicated that:

‘When the training is over, there is no follow-up, neither from the point of view of the conditions in which the training is carried out, nor of the quality of the employment’.

iii) The social stigmatisation of the Apprenticeship.

It was stated by most of the participants in the workshop that social stigmatisation of the Apprenticeship system remains difficult to solve. Most of the students who attend the Apprenticeship, but also VET programmes, come from unfavourable socio-economic backgrounds and have school failures rates (Justino, D; Santos, R, et al,2017; Doroftei, 2020). This reality gives a negative perception to the system and contributes to its stigmatisation. One trade unionist stated:

'More than the students' demand for the system, we must see that there is a social force that pushes these students into the system, so we have to fight hard to reverse the negative image that the system has as a result of this issue'.

There are annual initiatives to promote VET in the country such as the vocational fair (Futurália²). In 2019, Futurália, had 530 companies and other entities, 15 countries represented, 44 international teaching bodies, 380 schools on study visits and 85 000 visitors. However, Futurália does not focus on the Apprenticeship, as it is more targeted to school based IVET.

To enhance social perception of the Apprenticeship system social partners have referred to the need for an effective integration between Education and Training policies.

ANQEP and IIEFP do not articulate education and training policies, which accentuates the competition for students and financing between VET and Apprenticeship providers. This integration of education and training policies is considered important to change social perceptions and improve the Apprenticeship system. According to a trade unionist statement:

'There are changes that are necessary but impossible to bring about; this dual jurisdiction of education and training does not contribute to solving this and other situations in the system. We have to see how we can achieve a system that integrates education and training'.

Another unionist indicated that *'the system has to be integrated and not segregated; these are indicators of negative segregation'.*

This issue about articulation between education and training policies was shared by both trade unionists and the employer confederation representative present at the workshop.

iv) The financing

The financing model was also referred as a constraint to the expansion and improvement of the system. The funding is not suited to the demographic context of the territories and the socio-economic characteristics of its population. There are regions where students cannot attend training due to economic difficulties and their territories. For example, their demographic contexts do not have a sufficient number of students to constitute a class that can be funded under the legislation in force. This view was shared by all the participants in the workshop. Furthermore, a trade unionist considered that:

'In some territories there are students that do not have money to pay for the transport to attend the courses, and the local authorities are also unable to provide transport'.

The other union agreed indicating that *'financing modalities have to be thought out on a territorial basis'.* In addition, another unionist stated that:

'Demographic problems are not only the number of students per class; they are also subsidies, so the socio-economic background of these students has to be analysed'.

However, the solution to Apprenticeship problems were seen by trade unions as not only related directly to money. When inquired about new financial packages, representatives of unions and of one vocational training centre agreed that they have no expectations regarding the national financing package, National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2020-2030 (PRR) the European Social

² As mentioned in the desk report the activities of this forum can be found in: <https://futuraia.fil.pt/>

Fund (ESF) nor the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)³. Concluding the discussion about the problems of Apprenticeship, one unionist stated that ‘5 thousand million euros from the PRR do not improve by itself the needs of students and businesses’ iv) *The role (or lack of it) of the companies.*

Companies do not engage in the Apprenticeship system and do not take an active role in the search for qualifications by getting directly involved in training and/or internships. Apart from two or three large companies of national or foreign capital, that have their own training centres, the involvement of companies is fundamentally obtained through the efforts of the training centres. Given this lack of proactivity on the part of companies, training centres are responsible for seeking out and contacting companies in which to place their trainees in order to carry out the respective internships. This issue was also stressed by several interviewees in the fieldwork report (Peliz, M. *et al.*, 2021) as an obstacle to the expansion of the system, as well as to its valorisation and expansion. One expert in the Portuguese VET system stated that ‘*If Apprenticeship were driven by enterprises there could be an expansion*’.

But it was not only the engagement of the companies in the Apprenticeship that was raised in the discussion. The organisational structure of companies, as well as their size and the sector of activity at local or regional level, were aspects raised by the workshop participants and the experts interviewed. The expert in the Portuguese VET system added that:

‘The organisation of the companies does not assimilate the organisation of the Apprenticeship, and upstream it is not understood that even through the Apprenticeship system we cannot intervene in the way companies are organised’

Another expert in the Portuguese VET system interviewed also raised this issue, stating that, ‘*In some geographical areas there is overload of apprentices considering the number of companies available to take them in one area of training/qualification*’.

This question raises another issue related to the identification of qualification needs at local and regional level. The participation of social partners in the local and regional identification of the qualification needs for the Apprenticeship system is not foreseen in the diagnosis of anticipation of qualifications (*Sistema Nacional de Antecipação de Qualificações - SANQ*) developed by ANQEP for VET. Social partners can participate in the Sectoral Councils for Qualifications (*Conselhos Sectoriais para a Qualificação - CSQ*) by proposing new qualifications in the National Catalogue of Qualifications (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações - CNQ*). SANQ is a methodological process that aims to identify training/qualification needs at local level, based on the National Catalogue of Qualifications. Social partners do not participate in this process.

This was an issue raised by a trade unionist and the employer confederation representative who participated in the workshop. The trade unionist stated that:

‘The qualification needs have to do with a strategic thinking that is not done and we have to know in which direction we want our productive sector to develop’.

The representative of the employer confederation reinforced the opinion of the unionist, stating that, *‘who is in the field knows the specific needs of the market to guarantee employability’.*

v) *Social dialogue*

The findings in the fieldwork pointed to the lack of social dialogue in Apprenticeship. This issue was confirmed by social partners in the workshop that considered it an obstacle to the

³ Other supporting European programmes are the Erasmus+ programme which has also been an important driver of supporting apprenticeships, the Union programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium sized Enterprises (COSME), the Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

development and success of the system. One trade unionist stated that *‘social partners were once interlocutors and gave a voice to the Apprenticeship system but this influence has been lost’*. In agreement with this statement the other trade unionist added that *‘the force of the social partners’ loss of influence re-emerges and so everyone has to start fighting in their own space’*. The representative of the employer confederation also agreed with these statements, adding that *‘The theme of Apprenticeship has a great potential of consensus that is not properly exploited’*

Moreover, the expert interviewed that referred to the governance of the Apprenticeship *‘is a simulacrum of participation’*, also stated that *either collective bargaining is established in the Apprenticeship sector or precariousness continues’*.

In this regard see the lack of prominence of the topic of training among social partners mentioned in the fieldwork report (Peliz, M. *et al.*, 2021)

2. Methodology

The information presented in the scenarios was based on the following outcomes: i) the fieldwork developed between may and the first half of July 2021; ii) the analysis of the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications signed on the 28th of July 202; iii) the workshop with the main social partners and public entities responsible for the regulation of VET and Dual VET.

Besides the workshop we also complemented the scenarios with interviews with three experts in the field of VET and Dual VET. One of the experts is a national expert in VET and was involved in the first steps of the creation of the network of the private VET schools. Is a full Professor at the Catholic University and has been writing about vocational education and of the apprenticeships in the country. Another expert is a member of the Portuguese Parliament and has been writing about VET and its main constraints. The third expert has recently written a doctoral thesis on vocational education, dealing with the Dual VET system in several countries, namely in Germany.

The fieldwork was developed through semi structured interviews with a number of social partners (Employers Confederations and Federations, and Trade Unions) and actors (Public Entities, Training Centres, VET schools, Sectoral Associations, Chambers of Commerce) and Companies.

The document of new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, signed days after completion of fieldwork, is the key element in the overall frame of the analysis of the involvement of the social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship.

The workshop took place on-line (due to the pandemic restriction still on going in the country) and involved the largest employer’s confederation in the country (CIP), the two main trade unions (UGT and CGTP), the VET and Dual VET regulatory agencies (ANQEP and IEFPP) and a training centre (CENFIM).

The interviews with experts in the education and training systems were open-ended interviews aimed at obtaining the experts perceptions on the future of Dual VET (future scenario) and the involvement of social partners in the governance of Apprenticeship.

The items relevant for each of governance levels (Streeck and Schmitter, 1985⁴), were grouped into Governance Categories that were mapped onto qualitative tables. This method sought to identify in a first moment, the level of involvement of social partners in the governance categories; in the second moment the perception of the different interviewees and workshop participants on

⁴ Streeck and Schmitter (1985) conceptualisation of governance levels, “political-strategic”, “technical-strategic” and “technical operational” used by Emmenegger and Seitzl (2020) on their analysis focused on systemic governance.

the changes expected with the measures set out in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications.

In order to qualify the level of involvement of social partners in the different categories of governance, a scale from 1 to 3 was given: (1- no involvement = no effective involvement; 2- some involvement = more informative and consultative; 3 - high involvement = more executive).

2.1. Mapping governance categories within the three levels of governance

The starting point for the construction of the scenarios was the mapping of the different categories of governance for each of governance levels considered in the Project, namely, the “political-strategic”, “technical-strategic” and “technical operational” (table 2).

Table 2: Categories of Governance

Levels of Governance	Categories of Governance
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies
	Legislation and Regulation
	Funding / Operational programmes
	Employability policies
Technical Strategic	Management of Apprenticeship (CNA)*
	Definition of local (financing) needs
	Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer
	Identification and definition of qualifications (SANQ)
	Participation in the Curricular design**
Technical Operational	Quality Assurance (EQAVET)
	Definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual + courses)
	Opening of classes with less than 25 students and medium short courses
	Training (level V Apprenticeship)
	Monitoring of training /internships and working conditions**

*Included in the New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

**Not included in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

These categories of governance resulted from the fieldwork (Peliz, M. *et al.*, 2021⁵) developed, and from measures set out in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications signed between the government and the social partners (trade unions and employer confederations) sitting on the CPCS on the 28th of July 2021.

One trade unionist added categories of governance that were included in the analysis as a whole. These categories are the following:

- Monitoring the impact of the measures implemented (quantitative and qualitative).
- Monitoring and follow-up of policy implementation.

⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z1UOjANHWi4YtoKlaJL15rQno6Gnj5vA/view>

- Monitoring the social partners' participation process.

Throughout the fieldwork and in the workshop, there were no specific references to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA)⁶, other than one trade unionist⁷ that mentioned an undergoing discussion and assessment in the EU about implementation process of EFQEA.

In Portugal, quality assurance frameworks, e.g. EQAVET, are being placed for VET and its reinforcement is foreseen in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, hence the reference to it in the governance categories.

Following the guidelines of the EFQEA, the Commission Staff Working Document⁸ assesses the Member States compliance with the 14 criteria of the Framework. Portugal is referred as a country that complies with most of the criteria (table 3).

Table 3. The 14 criteria for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships – Portugal compliance

7 criteria for learning and working conditions	Situation	7 criteria for framework conditions	Situation
<i>1. Written agreement</i>	√	<i>1. Regulatory framework</i>	√
<i>2. Learning outcomes</i>	*	<i>2. Involvement of social partners</i>	√
<i>3. Pedagogical support</i>	√	<i>3. Support for companies</i>	**
<i>4. Workplace component</i>	√	<i>4. Flexible pathways and mobility</i>	***
<i>5. Pay or compensation</i>	√	<i>5. Career guidance and awareness raising</i>	√
<i>6. Social protection</i>	√	<i>6. Transparency</i>	√
<i>7. Work, health and safety conditions</i>	√	<i>7. Quality assurance and tracking of apprentices</i>	****

Source: Commission Staff Working Document, SWD (2021) 230 final

Legend:

√ = total compliance with the criteria

*Initial stage; most advanced in the tourism sector

** Not in place, although the AVTQ foresees support to companies on the base of financial incentives

*** In place to some extent

**** In initial stage and further strengthened by the Decree-Law n° 92/2014, 20 June

Considering the overall legislation and regulation of the Apprenticeship system⁹ and the developments foreseen in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, Portugal complies with most of the criteria.

⁶ EFQEA calls for the involvement of social partners including, where relevant, at sectoral level and/or intermediary bodies, should be involved in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes, in line with national industrial relations systems and education and training practices.

⁷ The trade unionist is from UGT and represents Portugal at the OECD education union committee and the National Federation for Education – FNE, in the Alliance for the Apprenticeships.

⁸ Commission Staff Working Document; Putting into practice the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships – implementation of the Council Recommendation by Member States, Brussels, SWD (2021) 230 final

⁹ Ordinance n.º 1497/2008; Ordinance n.º 60-C/2015, 2 March, changed by Ordinances n.º 181-A/2015, 19 June, n.º 190-A/2015, 26 June and 148/2016, 23 May

However, there are criteria which are still enshrined in formal legislation and are beginning to be implemented, namely: i) the learning outcomes from the education, VET and Apprenticeship (e.g. *Perfil do Aluno à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória* – ‘Profile of the Student Leaving Compulsory School’ and Key Apprenticeships – *Aprendizagens Essenciais*) ii) the support to companies, which is foreseen in the Agreement Vocational Training and Qualifications; iii) flexible pathways in place mostly directed to adults or to population that did not conclude lower and upper secondary education; iv) quality assurance and tracking of apprentices that have been strengthened recently.

Another context of analysis that supports one of the scenarios presented, are the principles the Osnabrueck Declaration¹⁰ on VET. In this Declaration, VET must ‘contribute to strategies to Covid-19 recovery, and cope with challenges such as: demographic changes, digital innovation, climate approaches, that put pressure in the economies to new and updated skills. Furthermore, to achieve these objectives ‘partnerships through social dialogue between other stakeholders such as companies, chambers, branch associations, VET providers, learners’ representatives, national, regional and local public administrations, employment services and social economic organisations’, have to be strengthened (Osnabrueck,2020, p.3).

Alongside Osnabrueck Declaration, there is the European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation¹¹ signed June 2020. The base of this Agreement is a ‘shared commitment of the European cross-sectoral social partners to optimise the benefits and challenges of digitalisation in the world of work’. Moreover, ‘social partners have a shared interest in facilitating access to quality, effective training and skills development while respecting the diversity and flexibility of training systems’. (Social Partners Declaration on Digitalisation, p.8).

The analysis of the scenarios is thus based on these frameworks and contexts and is complemented by the opinions and inputs from the fieldwork and the workshop carried out during these phases of the project.

2.2. Preparing the workshop

The Portuguese team invited employer confederations, trade unions, public entities (IEFP and AQNEP) and a training centre (CENFIM). This training centre has on its board of directors two sectoral associations (AIMMAP and ANEME). The workshop had the most relevant actors in Apprenticeship: CIP, CGTP, UGT, IEFP, ANQEP and CENFIM.

To prepare the discussion in the workshop, the participants were invited beforehand to express their views by focusing on the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications and by identifying the categories of governance where a change/improvement in their involvement would occur.

As shown in table 4, despite the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, social partners responses show different opinions as to an effective change/improvement in their involvement in the governance of the Apprenticeship.

One trade unionist (UGT), together with the representative of the training centre, considered that there would be no change on their involvement in the overall categories of governance of the Apprenticeship system. The trade unionist from CGTP stressed that their involvement would remain purely formal and even at the technical operational level social partners would only act as training providers. The main critics were: the lack of joint work for an in-depth analysis of the

¹⁰ https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf

¹¹ https://www.etuc.org/system/files/document/file2020-06/Final%2022%2006%2020_Agreement%20on%20Digitalisation%202020.pdf

qualitative and quantitative impact of the measures applied; the lack of monitoring of the policies implemented, and the participation process of the social partners.

The trade unionist from emphasised the need to further negotiations towards a better framework of their participation in the governance of the Apprenticeship, expecting a more executive role in the different levels of governance after the Agreement negotiations.

The representative of the employer confederation presented a more positive view with the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, considering that there will be greater involvement of social partners in the different levels of governance.

The public entities have not anticipated their opinions, but contributed to the discussion, not only by clarifying some perceptions of the social partners of the role of the regulators, but also putting forward some concerns regarding the regulation and organisation of the system.

Table 4: The improvement of the involvement of the social partners within the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

Levels of Governance	Governance categories	There will be no change to the current involvement of the social partners	Needs further negotiation	There will be more involvement of the social partners
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies	XX	X	X
	Legislation and Regulation	XX	X	X
	Funding / Operational programmes	XX	X	X
	Employability policies	XX	X	X
Technical Strategic	Definition of local (financing) needs	X	XX	X
	Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)	XX	X	X
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer	XX	X	X
	Identification and definition of qualifications (SANQ)	XX	X	X
	Participation in the Curricular design**	XX	XX	
	Quality Assurance (EQAVET)	XX	X	X
Technical Operational	Definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual + courses)	XX	X	X
	Opening of classes with less than 20 students and medium short courses	XX	X	X
	Training (Level V of the Apprenticeship)	XX	X	X
	Monitoring of training /internship and working conditions**	XX	XX	

*Included in the New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

**Not included in the Agreement

Note: The X refers to the number of participants that answered to each of the questions; X= 1 participant.

3. Scenarios

Four scenarios were constructed that present two opposing perspectives on the involvement of social partners in the Apprenticeship governance. Scenarios 1 and 2, reflect a more pessimistic view of social partners about their involvement at all levels of governance, although with some scope for greater involvement at the strategic technical level. Scenarios 3 and 4, reflect a rather optimistic view of what is expected from the social partners, both from the European strategies for VET systems (scenario 3) and from the measures in the Portuguese new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications (scenario 4).

The discussion at the workshop focused in the current involvement of social partners in the categories of governance and in the measures of the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications. The Agreement provides for a substantial increase in the level of involvement of social partners in the governance of Apprenticeship, both at decision/policy making capacity and executive role. It was constructed with the contribution of social partners, with a seat in the CPCS, and other stakeholders invited to submit proposals in the working group convened, for this purpose, by the Ministry of Labour.

However, most of the participants in the workshop were very sceptical. On the one hand, trade unions presented very low expectations about the fulfilment of the 'expressions of will' of most of the measures contained in the Agreement. On the other hand, the representative of the employer confederation presented very positive expectations, although considering the need for further negotiations to better clarify the scope of this involvement.

In general, social partners expressed expectations of greater involvement at technical strategic level, particularly following the planned reactivation of the CNA, but also considered that everything could stay the same, even after further negotiations on the Agreement. Moreover, most of the participants in the workshop, and also the experts interviewed, considered unlikely that the State/government will relinquish centralised regulatory and policy-making functions, thus, a greater involvement of social partners at political strategic level would be unlikely.

In addition, at operational level, it was clear in the discussions, that the employer confederations have a greater interest in the Apprenticeship, than trade unions. For the employer confederation, Apprenticeship is a much faster answer to the needs of the companies and a key factor of employability, and the creation of qualification level V increases the skills needed for their business. For trade unions, the major interest is their role in the monitoring of training /internship and working conditions. However, this monitoring was not consensual in the negotiations and does not appear in the Agreement.

These insights led to the construction of scenario 1 and 2, which reflects a more negative view of future outcomes about their effective involvement in the governance of Apprenticeship.

Scenario 3 was built by the research team from the interpretation of many of the interviewees' and workshop participants' questioning and follows the European strategy and guidelines lines for VET systems. It projects greater involvement and commitment between social partners and stakeholders at technical level where there is required their involvement in providing planning, evaluation and knowledge production about the Apprenticeship system in order to guarantee its quality. Strategically this scenario has the potential to revitalise the system and its wider framework in the education and training system, by solidifying the bridges (permeability) to higher education training and contributing to its valorisation expanding to a broader population in the line of long life learning.

In scenario 4, the involvement of social partners in line with the measures provided for in the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, increases significantly and at all levels of governance. The overall context of the measures provided for in this agreement, both with regard to CVET and Apprenticeship. In a process of transferring or delegation of responsibilities the State, while not abdicating its strategic functions of defining policies, or regulation, shares them with social partners and with the other stakeholders. Scenario 2 and 4 maximise the involvement of social partners, drawing attention to the need for them to play a more active role in the education and training system. Both in the contribution to policymaking and in the effective participation in decisions regarding the different categories considered at each of the levels of governance.

3.1. Scenario 1 – Business as usual –Apprenticeship as presently

The involvement of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship in scenario 1 results from their opinions in the fieldwork, reinforced in the workshop.

The main conclusion indicated a formal representation and no effective role at any level of governance. Statements from one of the employer confederation representatives and from trade unionists confirm this conclusion. The representative of the employer confederation stated: ‘*Social partners in Portugal have a merely advisory role*’. The representatives of the two trade unions stated: ‘*We have a seat on several governing entities, but this intervention is purely consultative*’.

This scenario considers the possibility of no changes in the involvement of social partners in the governance due to their low expectations despite the signed Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications (table Scenario 1).

Scenario 1 - Business as usual

Levels of Governance	Categories of Governance	Employer Confederations	Trade Unions
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies	1	1
	Legislation and Regulation	1	1
	Funding / Operational programmes	1	1
	Employability policies	1	1
Technical Strategic	Definition of local (financing) needs	1	1
	Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)	1	1
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer	1	1
	Identification and definition of qualifications (SANQ)	2	1
	Curricular design	1	1
	Quality Assurance (EQAVET)	1	1
Technical Operational	Definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual + courses)	1	1
	Opening of classes with less than 20 students and medium short courses	1	1
	Training	2	2
	Monitoring of training /internships and working conditions	1	1

Note: This assessment was developed before the signature of the New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications and does not include the category of governance ‘Management of Apprenticeship’ through CNA
Legend:

1 = no involvement (no effective involvement)	2 = some involvement (informative and consultative involvement)	3 = high involvement (executive role, among others)
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At **technical strategic level**, one employer confederation referred having *some involvement* in the identification and the definition of qualification needs (SANQ) stating that: ‘*we have some intervention in the identification and the definition of the qualification needs*’; However, this involvement is consultative and does not occur regularly.

At **technical operational level** social partners participate in the training through their sectoral associations and/or training centres.

As referred above, the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications was being discussed in a working group, but still, expectations about improvements were low for the majority of the interviewees and of the participants in the workshop (see table 4). An expert in the Portuguese VET system also presented a negative perspective about changes resulting from the new Agreement in stating that, ‘*even if we draw up alternative scenarios, the current context of social partner involvement remains a traditional scenario without any profound transformation*’.

The State/government centralises strategical and technical levels of governance having a mobilising and guiding role in the regulation of the system, both in the definition of the policies, legislation and the allocation of funds.

3.2. Scenario 2 - Low expectations within further negotiations of the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

Scenario 2 reflects the outcomes expected by social partners from the negotiations that will take place in the working group convened by the Ministry of Labour, to prepare the strategies, timeline and the action plan for implementation of the signed Agreement (table scenario 2). Although they identify the possibility of a more executive role at technical strategic level, expectations of improvements, in relation to the current situation in scenario 1, remain low, even after further negotiations of the Agreement.

Scenario 2 - Low expectations within further negotiations of the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

Levels of Governance	Categories of Governance	Employer Confederations	Trade Unions
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies	2	2
	Legislation and Regulation	2	2
	Funding / Operational programmes	2	2
	Employability policies	2	2
Technical Strategic	Management of the Apprenticeship	3	3
	Definition of local (financing) needs	3	2
	Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)	3	2
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer	3	3

	Identification and definition of qualifications for the Apprenticeship	3	3
	Participation in the Curricular design	2	2
	Monitoring the impact of the measures implemented (quantitative and qualitative)	2	3
	Monitoring and follow-up of policy implementation	2	3
	Monitoring the social partners' participation process	2	3
	Quality Assurance (EQAVET)	2	2
Technical Operational	Definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual + courses)	3	2
	Opening of classes with less than 20 students and medium short courses	3	2
	Training (including Level V of the Apprenticeship)	3	3
	Monitoring of training /internship and working conditions	1	1

* Through the National Commission for Apprenticeship (*Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem – CNA*)

** Not included in the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

Legend:

1 = no involvement (no effective involvement)	2 = some involvement (informative and consultative involvement)	3 = high involvement (executive role, among others)
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This scenario points to improvements in the involvement of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship system, mainly at technical strategical level. However, there are still many doubts and low expectations, expressed by workshop participants, as to what will result from future negotiations under the Agreement. Trade unions were more sceptical about the changes in their involvement within the Agreement.

At **political strategic level** the main line of reflection was that it is unlikely that the State/government will relinquish centralised regulatory and policy-making functions. Despite the differences in the expectations of trade unions and confederations (see table 4), the discussion at the workshop allows to conclude that, in general, social partners envisage some involvement in policy making, by proposing changes or improvements, although through in-puts/proposals which may or may not be accepted.

At **technical strategical level** the reactivation of the National Commission for Apprenticeship (*Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem – CNA*) is a key factor in increasing the capacity of social partners to intervene in the governance of the Apprenticeship system. CNA has a tripartite committee, representatives from different ministries (economy, labour, agriculture and education), and will operate within the IEFPP.

In the context of the tasks to be entrusted to CNA, the issues raised by trade unions in relation to the monitoring of the impact of the measures implemented (quantitative and qualitative), the monitoring and follow-up of policy implementation and the monitoring of the social partners' participation process, may have the potential to be addressed.

Trade unions pointed out their commitment to a shared involvement in monitoring the impact of the measures and policies implemented, insisting on the need to be provided with information that will enable them to be more proactive.

Employer confederations expressed a positive view about improvements in their involvement, at technical strategic level, in the frame of further negotiations about the Agreement. Their ‘reservations’ were related to their *participation in curricular design* and *quality assurance (EQAVET)*, which they believe are of less direct interest to them than it is to other stakeholders or their associates, particularly those that provide the training.

However, both employer confederations and trade unions, however, envisage higher involvement in most of the categories of governance at technical strategic level, despite some differences which can be related to their set of interests or also some minor expectations.

At **technical operational level** trade unions envisage an increase in their involvement in the training, particularly by providing level V of Apprenticeship in the schools they own. However, there are no expectations about their involvement in monitoring the training /internship and working conditions. The lack of social dialogue in the Apprenticeship in order to guarantee, through collective bargaining, training conditions and dignified work, is still an unanswered question which does not come within the framework of the negotiations of the Agreement.

Employer confederations expressed their complete lack of interest in these issues by responding with silence in the workshop discussion. However, they expect and believe in a higher involvement/ participation in the *definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual+ courses)* and in defining the number of students in each courses/class. This decision capacity envisaged increases their executive power, for example, in defining local financing needs.

This scenario is the most realistic, from the point of view of the social partners' opinion, however, its implementation is still dependent on the negotiations taking place under the signed Agreement.

3.3. Scenario 3 - Towards the European Strategy for VET

This scenario is a more strategic view on what could be the contribution of the Apprenticeship to tackle the challenges of the pandemic Covid-19, the digital economy considering the demographic, social and economic constraints society face. It is designed as a needed response to the European guidelines for VET systems and the socio-economic challenges ahead.

New and more updated skills and competences to be acquired through VET are a demand to face these challenges, reasons why there is an updated version of the European New Skills Agenda 2025¹². This Agenda is linked to the European Digital Strategy, to Industrial Small and Medium Companies Strategies, to Recovery Plans for Europe (Recovery and Resilience Plans) and to increased European support for youth employment.

Following the Osnabruek Declaration, the involvement of several stakeholders along with the main social partners (trade unions and employer confederations) is a key factor to the success of the challenges for the VET systems in this framework.

It is difficult for the Member States to ignore these challenges and opportunities launched by the European support programmes and strategies.

In Portugal, the New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications has in mind the necessary adaptations of the training system, whether initial (IVET) or continuous (CVET)

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

training, and in particular the Apprenticeship. Among other measures of this Agreement, the attribution of level V of qualification to the Apprenticeship system is already an effective answer to the guidelines of the Osnabrueck Declaration. In this declaration it is stated that VET systems must provide permeability to Higher Education ‘thus the relevance of VET programmes at European Qualification Framework (EQF) 5 to 8, on a par with Higher Education’ (Osnabrueck Declaration p.5).

Social partners and other stakeholders’ participants in the fieldwork and workshop have considered level V and permeability important achievements of the Apprenticeship in the signed Agreement. They indicated that level V was a step to a better recognition of the system, and it provides better opportunities to students, whether young or adults.

Despite the scepticism and/or natural lack of knowledge as to the developments (negotiations) of the action plan for the implementation of the Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications, as well as some reactivity to European policies for VET, scenario 3 is built upon a broader interpretation, by the research team, about the knowledge, concerns and expectations of the social partners throughout their interventions in the different phases of the project (table scenario 3).

This scenario shows slight differences in relation to those apprehended in the other scenarios, but these were also due to the interventions of the stakeholders in the workshop.

Scenario 3 - Towards the European Strategy for VET

Levels of Governance	Categories of Governance	Employers Confederations	Trade Unions	Training Entities	Companies
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies	3	3	2	1
	Legislation and Regulation	3	3	2	2
	Participation in the decisions of funding / Operational programmes	2	2	1	1
	Employability policies	3	2	2	3
	Integration of Education and Training Policies*	2	2	1	1
Technical Strategic	Management of the Apprenticeship**	3	3	3	2
	Definition of local (financing) needs	3	3	2	1
	Participation in the Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)	3	3	3	3
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer (sectoral needs)	3	3	3	3
	Identification, definition and updating of qualifications	3	3	3	3
	Participation in the curricular design	3	3	3	3
	Quality assurance and tracking of apprentices (EFQEA)	3	3	3	3
Technical Operational	Definition of local Dual flexible and short courses	3	3	3	3

Career guidance and awareness raising***	2	2	3	2
Training (Level V of the Apprenticeship)	3	2	3	3
Monitoring of training /internship and working conditions	1	2	3	3
Post-training assessment	3	3	3	1

*Interministerial Commission for the Coordination of Education and Training; **National Commission for Apprenticeship (Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem – CNA); *** Psycho-social counselling

Legend:

1 = no involvement (no effective involvement)	2 = some involvement (informative and consultative involvement)	3 = high involvement (executive role, among others)
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At **political strategic level** the involvement of social partners in policy and decision making increase their responsibilities in the definition of education and training policies.

At **technical strategic level** companies play an important role. The involvement of the companies determines its success and recognition of the Apprenticeship as an important qualification instrument.

Throughout the fieldwork, companies referred to the importance of the qualifications that the system provides. However, they consider that these could be more adjusted to their needs, either in terms of specific technical competencies or in terms of the knowledge provided to the trainees about the functioning of the business organisations (soft skills).

Social partners' involvement in finding these competencies is more passive than proactive, and the role of the training entities is important in providing this information to the companies. Moreover, as stated by an external expert interviewed, the massification of the system, as well as the concentration of students in certain training areas, leads to the '*saturation of companies, which end up not being able to take on any more trainees*'. This question should be studied, involving political decisions regarding the axes of strategic development of the country.

Social dialogue has a crucial role in bringing together these players into the system. But companies, despite their greater or lesser organisational difficulties, should contribute to this social dialogue enhancing the system by intervening in planning, training, mentoring and incorporating trainees into their staff with the necessary skills for its development (to curb technological and scientific obsolescence).

The National Commission for Apprenticeship (CNA) is the governance space that by the nature of its attributions (management of the Apprenticeship system) can improve the performance of the Apprenticeship and consolidate social dialogue on issues (training) where this was considered to be of potential consensus.

The national Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) has not raised expectations among trade union participants as to the improvement of the system. However, the amount of money allocated to this programme is important to create substantive conditions for the (re)launch of the Apprenticeship, as it is the most flexible to cope with the socio-economic challenges ahead. Financial support to companies is foreseen within the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications under PRR.

At **technical operational level** training centres/entities have a major responsibility in providing this training, in close cooperation with companies, to map the competences and contents (curricular design) needed, but also in providing counselling, career guidance and awareness to tackle the psycho-social problems that many students bring with them.

Mentoring (Tutor) is an important part of internships, and it should be shared and disseminated by companies and training centres to create know-how and critical mass. Works councils and trade union representatives should be involved in its monitoring and evaluation contributing to the quality of the system and to its transparency.

Public administration (national, local or regional) should provide the framework for the regulation of the system, certifying the training (courses), by framing the competences in the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), and companies participating in the training.

The certification of companies through their contractualisation can contribute to improve the quality of the system in terms of responsibilities of the economic sector in the Apprenticeship. However, if this process results in bureaucratic administrative procedures, it may also drive small and medium-sized entrepreneurs away from the system, jeopardising the possibilities for its extension. Thus, the process of companies' engagement in the Apprenticeship system must be agile and flexible and the financing mechanisms must be transparent. According to a representative of IEFP *'The apprenticeship system is a very hidden secret in our country'*.

Adding to this statement, transparency is a key factor to the improvement of the Apprenticeship. The main indicators of lack of transparency are the lack of evaluation of the system in terms of working conditions, type of learning and its application at work, quality of employment, post-training situation, among other evaluation indicators.

Scenario 3 points to a greater involvement and commitment between the different stakeholders at the technical strategic level. It is required their involvement in providing planning, evaluation and knowledge production about the Apprenticeship system in order to guarantee its quality.

Strategically this scenario has the potential to revitalise the system and its wider framework in the education and training system, by solidifying the bridges (permeability) to higher education training and contributing to its valorisation expanding to a broader population in the line of long life learning (LLL).

Overall, the reflections developed in the workshop within the discussions of possible scenarios, were to invest in an Apprenticeship more targeted to a broader population, considering the implementation of level V of qualification in the system, and by focusing primarily on the acquisition and reinforcement of the skills needed by the companies. The representative of the employer confederation present in the workshop stated that:

'The Apprenticeship system gains scale only if it responds to employers' needs and for that, the social partners have to be involved in the training/qualification needs'

It would be an Apprenticeship system with less young people, with smaller classes, focused on the needs of the micro and small and medium companies, conferring professional certification. The qualifications provided by the Apprenticeship would be designed to respond to the dynamics of the economy by working on their medium-term projections at sectoral levels, by anticipating skills trends, and by selecting, combining and presenting evidence-base on skills forecasts. This is also one of the guidelines of the Osnabrueck Declaration 2020 for Dual VET systems.

In line with these reflections the representative of the training centre stated that: *'we may have to move towards a more instrumental system'*.

At technical strategic level, for example, with regard to the identification of qualification needs carried out through SANQ (which is directed to school based VET and not to Apprenticeship), there are two options: the first option is to include the Apprenticeship in the SANQ by reinforcing the articulation between Education and Training; the second option is for the social partners to develop a specific tool and methodology of identification of qualification needs taking in consideration the socioeconomic, territorial and demographic specificities.

A more flexible governance at technical strategic level could contribute to a better planning and evaluation of the system and to improve social dialogue, as decisions had to be agreed and discussed among social partners. As a trade unionist present in the workshop stated:

‘A more flexible governance where social partners have a greater decision capacity is what the Apprenticeship system needs’

The reactivation of CNA is considered an opportunity for increased social dialogue in Apprenticeship and a more flexible structure of governance. However, its scope of action is still unknown, although discussions about the structure and functions of this commission are foreseen in the framework of the Agreement's implementation plan negotiations.

As shown in table 8 the social partners could benefit from this structure in terms of a more executive role in the system, by increasing their participation both at a technical strategic and technical operational level, but also contributing more effectively to the definition of policy measures.

However, the reactivation of CNA also raised some questions about the policies of integration and articulation between Education and Training, desired by the participants in the workshop. The representative of the training centre present in the workshop stated that:

‘Maybe the idea of the reactivation of the National Commission for Apprenticeship is to separate even more education issues from training issues’

3.4. Scenario 4 – New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications.

Scenario 4 is based on the measures of the new Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications following the proposals forwarded by social partners (employers confederations and trade unions) and by other stakeholders. These proposals were discussed within the working group convened by the Ministry of Labour do prepare the measures of the Agreement. The final draft of the Agreement was then, discussed in the CPCS and signed by social partners represented.

One trade union did not sign this Agreement. The argument presented by this trade union¹³ was that the conditions to respond to a set of demands were not met, of which, for the purpose of this analysis, the absence of measures that contribute to the involvement of social partners in the regulation and monitoring of training stands out.

In the framework of the signed Agreement the participation of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship improves significantly, reaching high levels of involvement at policy making and executive functions in most of the categories and levels of governance (table scenario 4).

Scenario 4 – New Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualifications

¹³ <http://www.cgtp.pt/cgtp-in/areas-de-acciao/emprego-e-formacao-profissional/16464-formacao-profissional-e-qualificacao-acordoadia-as-solucoes-e-perpetua-os-problemas-2>

Levels of Governance	Categories of Governance	Employer Confederations	Trade Unions
Political Strategic	Policy measures and strategies	3	3
	Legislation and Regulation	3	3
	Funding / Operational programmes	3	3
	Employability policies	3	3
Technical Strategic	Definition of local (financing) needs	3	3
	Allocation of financial and material resources (fund management)	3	2
	Territorial planning of Dual training offer	3	3
	Identification and definition of qualifications (SANQ)	3	3
	Curricular design	1	1
	Quality Assurance (EQAVET)	3	3
Technical Operational	Definition of local Dual training supply needs (short dual + courses)	3	3
	Opening of classes with less than 20 students and medium short courses	3	3
	Training (Level V of the Apprenticeship)	3	3
	Monitoring of training /internship and working conditions	1	1

* Through the National Commission for Apprenticeship (*Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem – CNA*)

**Not included in the Agreement

Legend:

1 = no involvement (no effective involvement)	2 = some involvement (informative and consultative involvement)	3 = high involvement (executive role, among others)
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Scenario 4 points to a greater improvement in the involvement of social partners in the governance of the Apprenticeship and less intervention of the State.

Most of the questions raised by social partners in the fieldwork regarding their involvement, seem to be answered in this Agreement. The exceptions are related to the curricular design and the monitoring of training/internship and working conditions. These categories, although discussed in the CPCS, are not included in the final document of the Agreement.

In this scenario, at **political strategic level**, social partners become involved in policy decisions, including those relating to the allocation of funds, and increase their executive power.

At **technical strategic level**, there is, also, an improvement of social partners' involvement in different categories of governance. The most relevant improvement is their participation in the SANQ, which only occurred through consultation,

At **technical operational level** there is an improvement in social partners' involvement in all categories of governance. The most relevant, are the *Definition of local Dual training supply*

needs (short dual + courses) and Opening of classes with less than 20 students and medium short courses. In the previous governance framework these categories of governance were centralised by the government through regulation mechanisms.

In addition, the role of the training centres and of the companies may also be reinforced within the scope of the measures foreseen in the Agreement, namely: to strengthen their role in training considering also the level V of qualifications in the Apprenticeship; to update the physical (facilities) and material resources (technological resources) of the training centres; to support, with financial incentives, the companies to enhance their involvement in the qualification of human resources, thus in the Apprenticeship system.

Despite these improvements, resulting from the Agreement, social partners had low expectations for the full implementation of these measures, emphasising the need for further negotiation allowing a better clarification of their role and effective involvement.

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