



Remiamas Šveicarijos indėliu mažinant ekonominius ir socialinius skirtumus ES
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Swiss Vocational Education and Training System Presented in a Virtual Meeting

On September 8, 2026, Lithuanian and Latvian representatives participated in a virtual meeting on the Swiss vocational education and training (VET) system. Lecturer Ms. Miriam Shergold outlined the system's key principles and opportunities. Miriam Shergold is an international expert in the Swiss dual Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, specialising in adult education and the integration of foreign nationals into the labour market.

"[Hotel & Gastro formation Switzerland](#)" organised the meeting. This non-profit association is the national vocational training and social partnership body for the hospitality sector. It develops training plans, oversees professional examination regulations, and maintains qualification standards. With a century of experience, the association is co-managed by the three largest industry unions: the employers' associations "GastroSuisse" and "HotellerieSuisse" and the workers' trade union "Hotel & Gastro Union". Members also include "CafetierSuisse" and the Swiss Catering Association (SCA).

The meeting covered the Swiss VET system's features, training principles, stakeholder responsibilities, regulatory framework, training plan development, and qualification procedures. A discussion session addressed participants' questions.

Vocational Training – A Joint Responsibility of Three Partners

The Swiss VET system relies on close cooperation among the Confederation, cantons, and private sector. The Confederation manages strategy and development, cantons oversee implementation and supervision, and professional organisations, companies, and social partners develop training content, organise apprenticeships, and conduct qualification procedures. Professional organisations monitor industry changes and labour market needs, update training programs, organise interbranch courses, contribute to qualification assessments, and collaborate with vocational schools, teachers, workplace trainers, examiners, and apprenticeship providers.

Companies voluntarily offer apprenticeship positions, helping to shape their sector, train future employees, gain new perspectives, and demonstrate social responsibility. All companies follow a standard training program for each qualification, and workplace trainers must complete a 40-hour training course.

Three Interconnected Learning Locations

A key feature of the Swiss VET system is training delivered across three interconnected locations:

- at a host company, where apprentices acquire practical professional skills;
- at a vocational school, where apprentices receive both professional and general education relevant to their sector.

Each learning location has defined outcomes. Apprentices complete learning documentation, and workplace trainers regularly assess their progress. Vocational schools and interbranch courses also record results.

The Swiss hospitality sector offers two- and three-year apprenticeship programs for chefs, restaurant service staff, hotel maintenance workers, guest relations personnel, catering specialists, and other support roles.

Training Content is Linked to Profession and Market Needs

A separate VET Ordinance and VET Plan are developed for each profession. The Ordinance sets the legal framework, defines the roles of the three learning locations, outlines workplace trainer requirements, details learning documentation procedures, and establishes principles for qualification procedures.

The VET Plan defines the qualification profile, professional activity fields, required skills and levels, and training content. It specifies which skills must be developed at each learning location. When updating qualifications, the company analyses industry needs, sets objectives, prepares draft documents, consults stakeholders, and implements approved documents.

Qualification Awarded Upon Assessment of Practical Skills and Theoretical Knowledge

To qualify, apprentices must complete a designated qualification procedure. The company evaluates their professional knowledge, practical skills, general education, and training outcomes. Final assessment tasks and questions reflect real professional situations. For example, a future chef may be asked to describe and evaluate two factors affecting the freshness of live crustaceans delivered to the company. This approach assesses both knowledge and its application in specific work scenarios.

The meeting also featured a presentation on "[SwissSkills](#)", a national competition where apprentices and recent graduates compete for the title of Swiss Champion in their fields. This event attracts public attention, highlights young professionals' excellence, and enhances the prestige of apprenticeships and vocational training in Switzerland.

The meeting allowed Lithuanian and Latvian representatives to deepen their understanding of the Swiss VET system, discuss the role of social partners, and explore coordination among host companies, vocational schools, and interbranch courses. The visit aims to learn from Swiss vocational training practices in third-country national integration and to strengthen partnerships between the countries. It is organised as part of the project "[Increasing Accessibility of Vocational Training for Third-Country Nationals](#)", No. PROF-ŠMSM-P-001, co-financed by the Swiss Confederation and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania.