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### **APPRENTICESHIPS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **MAXIME CERUTTI, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESSEUROPE AT IV CONFERENCE ON DUAL LEARNING**

- Dual-learning apprenticeship systems can play a key role in providing young people with the skills and competences that will help them into employment and which will contribute to increasing Europe's global competitiveness.
- This conference builds on work undertaken by BUSINESSEUROPE last year in which we explored the value of apprenticeships for young people and employers and identified a series of recommendations for further action at the EU and Member State level as well as for employers' organisations and companies.
- These recommendations included the need to improve the perception of apprenticeships and to make the business case for them. This is why it is particularly important that there will be a discussion today on the costs and benefits of apprenticeships.
- To countries that do not have well-established apprenticeship systems, or no system at all, exploring the costs involved in developing such systems and the trade off with the benefits that employers will get is essential.
- It can be the mindset that the cost of training someone outweighs the benefits by being a burden on a company's financial and human resources. This view needs to be challenged.
- This includes looking at apprenticeships as an investment in the workforce. On the spot training teaches someone how to work in a specific area, as well as in a specific company. It builds a bond between the company and apprentice that can lead to them staying on after the completion of their training. This can be far more cost and time efficient than looking to bring in new recruits from elsewhere.
- By drawing of the experiences of the dual-learning systems that operate in Austria, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland, the purpose of today's conference is to identify the principles that characterise well-functioning apprenticeship systems and which can be promoted as broader European principles for successful schemes.
- It is in this direction that the proposed European Alliance for Apprenticeships needs to head in order to bring real added value. Through the pooling of knowledge and experience and building partnerships between employers and education providers we can help to make the business case for apprenticeships and improve their attractiveness among young people and throughout society.