



Supporting Young Trainees: The Excellence Initiative in Hamburg, Germany

About the Excellence Initiative: In Germany, like in other EU Member States, the security industry needs many more young people - but unfortunately, they often complain about the quality of training in the companies and the drop-out rate is high. According to the German government's vocational training report, almost half of all training contracts in the sector are terminated prematurely. In order to change this situation, the Hamburg regional group of the CoESS German member BDSW, together with ver.di (trade union), ASW Nord (local security association), the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, and the Berufsschule 27 (VET school), has launched an initiative to improve training conditions, the "Excellence Initiative for Training Companies in the Security Industry". This is how the support programme works in practice:

Mentorship and ombudswoman: Part of this "Excellence Initiative" is currently an ombudswoman who is jointly appointed by all partners. The trainees can describe their problems in the companies to her and then seek a solution together with her and, if necessary, the training company, the chamber of commerce, and the vocational school.

Quality certification for companies: to help ensure that trainees learn in qualified and committed companies in Hamburg, participating businesses need to fulfil special quality requirements, which are examined by an independent committee. If these are met, the training company is awarded a seal of excellence, which is intended to help trainees choose a qualified training company. Quality requirements include, for example, that from six trainees onwards, one employee must be available as a training manager on a part-time basis and, from 15 trainees onwards, on a full-time basis. From 2021 onwards, at least one master craftsman for protection and security shall oversee the training. No work shall be carried out during the vocational school block. This also applies to weekends and the Sunday before and Saturday after the block. In addition, the training time may not exceed 173 hours per month on average for the quarter, and trainees shall do no overtime during probationary periods.

Quality training: The trainees are released once per quarter for one day for inter-company training organised by the regional group of BDSW with continued payment of the training allowance. The training company further offers to the trainees certain additional training content (which goes beyond the content specified by the framework curriculum and is related to the occupation of service/security specialist) free of charge for at least five days per training year.

Support for disadvantaged young people: The training company also enables trainees with a grade average lower than 4.0 (from 1.0, the highest, to 6.0, the lowest grade) to make use of training-accompanying assistance, assisted training and/or other internal or external support programmes. Also, overtime is prohibited for respective trainees, so they have more time to study. Similar national programmes exist, such as ASAFLEX - a programme of the Federal Employment Agency, providing a wide range of assistance.



Quality control: In order to monitor the above-mentioned and other agreed standards, excellence training companies are subject to voluntary monitoring. The inspection is carried out by two members of an Excellence Inspection Committee, which also includes the Ombudswoman, at regular intervals. If there are complaints, extraordinary audits are carried out. Young people who cannot take up or continue vocational training on their own are eligible for support.

Positive impact of the initiative: According to the Chamber and ver.di, the number of complaints and the dropout rate have decreased noticeably since the initiative was introduced. According to Frank Schimmel, Chair of the BDSW Training Committee, success factors of the initiative are:

- Strong collaboration of all stakeholders and short communication channels organised around the VET school.
- Local focus, as Hamburg is a city state with one VET school, one chamber, etc.
- An ombudsperson who knows the industry and training frameworks.
- Driving forces from all stakeholders involved, willing to commit their time.

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