

*Together for the Congress of Dual Education*

# **FINAL REPORT ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

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The project “Together Towards the Congress of Dual Education” was a nationwide initiative implemented by the Society and Economy Foundation, in cooperation with the National Career Guidance Forum and the German partner – Institut für angewandte Beratungswissenschaften GmbH. The aim of the project was to identify barriers and determine preferred forms of involvement for industry organizations and economic self-government bodies in the development of dual education in Poland. The project also aimed to develop recommendations for public institutions and to create a space for partnership-based dialogue between education and the labor market.

## **DESK RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

The project activities began in March 2024. A comprehensive desk research analysis was developed, serving as the foundation for selecting the themes and formulating questions addressed to participants of the expert panels. This document included, among other things, a review of the vocational education system in Poland, an analysis of the current legal framework, regulations concerning juvenile employees and the organization of vocational training, as well as detailed statistical overviews – such as the number of students in vocational schools, the popularity of specific professions, and the structure of juvenile employment in the craft and trade sectors.



The analysis also discussed various forms of involvement of industry organizations and chambers of commerce in vocational education, taking into account the specific characteristics of each voivodeship.

An important component of the document was also the development of a set of discussion topics for the 16 expert panels. The proposed questions covered, among others: the quality of cooperation between schools and companies, administrative and organizational barriers, employers' expectations towards graduates, the role of career counseling, and the need to develop patronage classes and local educational-economic clusters.

Additionally, the analysis compiled several examples of local good practices – grassroots partnerships between schools and employers – illustrating how such cooperation contributes to the quality of education and better preparation of young people for the labor market.

## EXPERT PANELS

Subsequently, between October 2024 and April 2025, sixteen regional expert panels were held – one in each voivodeship. A coherent picture emerged across all regions, highlighting both the challenges and development directions for dual education in Poland. Experts representing schools, companies, local governments, universities, and labor market institutions identified eight key areas requiring action:

1. Lack of a long-term strategy and coordination

In every region, the need for a national dual education strategy – with a vision extending to 2050 – was emphasized. Current efforts are fragmented and often influenced by short-term political shifts. Experts



recommended the establishment of an inter-ministerial task force or a government-appointed coordinator to ensure continuity and coherence in reform implementation.

## 2. Mismatch between educational offerings and labor market needs

Vocational education is often misaligned with actual labor market demands. There is a significant shortage of professionals in construction, IT, logistics, energy, and healthcare. Experts proposed implementing a systematic labor market monitoring mechanism and aligning education pathways accordingly, while also supporting the development of future-oriented professions (green economy, digitalization, aging society).

## 3. Excessive barriers for businesses

Employers are discouraged by complex procedures, lack of incentives, and financial risks. Micro and small enterprises in particular need support. Panelists called for full reimbursement of student training costs (already addressed in the 2025 legislative amendment), simplified administrative processes, and the creation of a central interpretation office for relevant regulations.

## 4. Insufficient hands-on vocational training

Existing internships are too short and inadequate. There is a need to increase the time students spend in real work environments, expand patronage classes, co-develop curricula with employers, and introduce dual education brokers to facilitate local partnerships.

## 5. Weak career counseling

Young people and their parents often lack reliable labor market information. Experts highlighted the need to professionalize career



counselors, introduce mandatory career guidance lessons starting in primary school, and create local career centers working closely with employers and universities.

#### 6. Low prestige of vocational education

Vocational schools continue to struggle with outdated stereotypes. An awareness campaign at the national level was recommended, along with investments in modern infrastructure and the development of educational pathways combining vocational qualifications with higher education opportunities.

#### 7. Need to learn from European models

Panelists advocated for drawing inspiration from countries like Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. This includes expanding professional mobility through Erasmus+, international internships, and the teaching of industry-specific foreign languages.

#### 8. Need for a permanent cooperation forum

Regional panels proved to be an effective tool for stakeholder integration. There was a clear call to establish permanent councils for dual education at both the regional and national levels – serving as platforms for dialogue, experience sharing, and monitoring of reform implementation.

Each panel contributed valuable data to the final project report and deepened the understanding of regional needs, potentials, and barriers to the development of dual education in Poland.



## DUAL EDUCATION CONGRESS

As part of the expert panel phase, the First Congress of Dual Education was held on 12 December 2024 in Łódź. During the event, preliminary conclusions and examples of good practices drawn from the ongoing regional discussions were presented. The final results and recommendations were subsequently shared on 15 May 2025 at the Final Congress held at the headquarters of the Polish Chamber of Commerce in Warsaw, with the participation of government representatives, local authorities, educational institutions, and business leaders.

The Final Congress on Dual Education, organized on 15 May 2025 in Warsaw, brought together experts from the fields of education, economy, and public administration. The event was held under the theme: “Learning a trade at the employer’s site – an opportunity for the economy.” It served as the culmination of several months of nationwide dialogue conducted within the framework of the “Together Towards the Congress of Dual Education” project.

The Congress was opened by Professor Czesław Noworol (Jagiellonian University, President of the National Career Guidance Forum), who – alongside the Society and Economy Foundation – has for years actively advocated for systemic changes, including the introduction of full (100%) reimbursement for employers training juvenile workers. The opening remarks were also delivered by Dorota Nawrat-Wyraz, Vice-Chair of the Vocational Education Committee of the Polish Chamber of Commerce.

In her address, Ewa Flasińska, Director of the Labour Market Department at the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, outlined the current challenges of the Polish labor market and emphasized the need for effective and flexible vocational education.





A particularly important moment of the Congress was the announcement made by Senator Joanna Sekuła, a member of the Senate Education Committee, that the Senate had adopted an amendment introducing full (100%) state reimbursement for employers providing workplace-based vocational training, as part of the amendment to the Education Law. This long-awaited measure had been advocated by employer groups, civil society organizations, and education experts.

The first discussion panel, moderated by Antoni Wontorczyk (Jagiellonian University, NFDK), focused on comparing models of dual education in Poland and Europe. The panel featured: Joanna Sekuła, Senator of the Republic of Poland, Ewa Flaszyńska, Director of the Labour Market Department, MRPiPS, Jan Grabkowski, Starost of Poznań County, Vice-President of the Association of Polish Counties, Katarzyna Juraszek, Deputy Chief Commander of the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), Mariusz Seńko, Member of the Collegium of the Łukasiewicz Research Network, Krzysztof Symela, Director of the Center for Research on Vocational Education and Innovation Management, Łukasiewicz Research Network.

The second panel, led by Dorota Nawrat-Wyras, explored the practical aspects of dual education in both small and large enterprises. Panelists included, among others, Katarzyna Pawlak-Weiss (Director of the Lower Silesian Teacher Development Center) and representatives of the Education Department of the City of Warsaw, Katarzyna Pieńkowska and Joanna Cholewińska.

Following the panel sessions, a debate was held with the participation of Krzysztof Paszyk, Minister of Development and Technology, and members of the Council of the Polish Chamber of Commerce, focusing on the role of entrepreneurs in practical vocational training.



## FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

A key deliverable of the project was the final research report, prepared after the conclusion of all expert panels and just prior to the Final Congress in May 2025. This report served as a comprehensive compendium of knowledge on the state of dual education in Poland, based on synthesized findings from regional discussions. It includes detailed summaries of all 16 expert panels, analysis of labor market trends, as well as key findings and recommendations.

The final report presents, among others: a typology of local challenges and developmental barriers, recommendations and proposals for regional authorities, communication strategies, and examples of good practices from schools and businesses that could be scaled to other regions.

Among the most important recommendations were the introduction of 100% state reimbursement for employers training students (adopted by the Sejm on 24 April 2025 and announced during the Final Congress by the Senator), the development of an interministerial strategy for vocational education, the creation of an electronic registry of training companies, the simplification of procedures for micro-enterprises, and the implementation of a systemic model for sectoral career guidance.

Additional recommendations included: enhancing the competencies of vocational teachers, expanding patronage classes, launching nationwide campaigns to promote vocational education, developing digital tools, and strengthening international cooperation, particularly with countries such as Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

As a tool for strategic planning, the final report became the foundation for a joint set of recommendations addressed to policymakers,



educators, and business communities. The project's findings were published on the official project website and widely disseminated during industry events and conferences.

## **NATIONWIDE COMPETITION INITIATIVE: “ANGEL OF DUAL EDUCATION” AWARD – 2025 EDITION**

In response to the conclusions drawn during the expert panels organized in all 16 voivodeships as part of the project “Together for the Congress of Dual Education”, the project organizer decided to launch a nationwide competition titled “Angel of Dual Education”, in recognition of outstanding achievements in workplace-based vocational training.

This initiative addresses the widely expressed regional need to acknowledge employers, organizations, and individuals who have made a significant contribution to the development of dual vocational education. In many voivodeships, panel participants emphasized that regional initiatives rewarding companies involved in vocational education (such as the “Employer Friendly to Schools” or “Competence Leader” contests) play an essential role—not only as tools for promotion and motivation but also by building the prestige and public trust in this form of education.

The competition was held on 15 May 2025 during the Congress of Dual Education.

The aims of the “Angel of Dual Education” Award were to:

- Recognize employers who provide high-quality vocational training opportunities,



- Honor individuals and institutions that actively support dual education,
- Promote partnership-based cooperation between schools and the business sector,
- Disseminate good practices and inspiring solutions from across the country.

The competition also formed part of a broader strategy to build a positive public image of dual education, supported through promotion in social media, online platforms, and industry events. As part of this initiative, a dedicated project website was launched:

 [www.dualne.edu.pl/aniol-ksztalcenia-dualnego](http://www.dualne.edu.pl/aniol-ksztalcenia-dualnego)

#### Award Categories

The competition included two award categories, based on the size of the enterprise:

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – employing between 1 and 249 staff (including micro, small, and medium companies),
- Large enterprises – employing 250 or more staff.

Each submitted company was assigned to one of these categories based on the declared number of employees.

As part of the Competition Committee's work, the submitted applications were reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the official rules. The award ceremony for the “Angel of Dual Education” statuettes took place during a formal Gala held within the framework of the 2025 edition of the Congress of Dual Education.



In the large enterprise category, two companies actively supporting the development of dual education in the Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) region were recognized: Volkswagen Poznań Sp. z o.o. and Solaris Bus & Coach Sp. z o.o.. Their long-standing cooperation with schools, establishment of patronage classes, organization of internships, and implementation of dual study programs represent exemplary models of education–business partnership.

#### Volkswagen Poznań Sp. z o.o.

The largest employer in the Wielkopolska region (approx. 9,500 employees) and manufacturer of VW Caddy and Crafter models. For over 20 years, the company has maintained close cooperation with local schools and universities, implementing dual vocational education programs. To date, over 700 students have graduated from patronage classes, and the company also offers dual study opportunities and internship programs. Volkswagen Poznań is involved in numerous educational initiatives and actively promotes vocational training as a future-oriented career path.

#### Solaris Bus & Coach Sp. z o.o.

One of Europe's leading manufacturers of low- and zero-emission buses, employing over 3,000 people. Since 2007, the company has operated patronage classes in the fields of mechatronics and welding, and also implements dual study programs in cooperation with Poznań University of Technology. Solaris actively promotes vocational education by participating in educational events and supporting campaigns for the development of practical training systems.



## SUMMARY

The project “Together Towards the Congress of Dual Education” created a unique platform for cooperation between education and business. The conclusions and proposals developed during the regional panels and congresses provide valuable input for future legislative and strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening vocational and dual education in Poland.

All project-related events – both the regional expert panels and the congresses – could be followed in real time through:

1. The official project website:

<https://sig.info.pl/projekt-razem-do-kongresu-ksztalcenia-dualnego/>

2. The project’s Facebook profile, where updates, announcements, photos, and informational materials were regularly published:

[Razem do Kongresu Kształcenia Dualnego | Facebook](#)

Thanks to these channels, both participants and observers had continuous access to the course of the initiative and its outcomes.

