

## 3.11 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

#### Taskforce Youth Unemployment and the COVID-19 pandemic

In order to mitigate the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures have brought about for young people on the labour market (as depicted in [Chapter 3.1](#)), the Federal government conducted a survey on 'Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth and the youth sector' and **established several measures to support the current situation of young people in regard to the labour market.**

#### Incentives to employers to hire young people

- *Apprenticeship Bonus (March 2021 – October 2021)*

A **bonus that ensures companies €2,000 for newly admitted apprentices**. Micro enterprises receive an additional raise of €1,000 and smaller enterprises receive an **additional bonus** of €500. The fundamental criterion here is the date of the apprenticeship contract. More information can be found [online](#).

- *Take-over bonus*

A **one-off bonus that ensures companies €1,000 for taking on an apprentice from a supra-company apprenticeship**. More information can be found [online](#).

#### Measures that protect young employees

More recently, **corona short-time work was also made available for apprentices** in order to preserve apprenticeship positions and to support the companies. **In 2020, approximately half of all apprentices (approximately 53,000) were working under short-time work conditions** at least temporarily. The seemingly positive effect of short-time work for apprentices is visible when inspecting the **stable development of apprenticeship numbers** in training companies which is why this concept was extended until the end of March 2021.

#### Measures to avoid job insecurity and precariousness

To raise the number of apprenticeship positions in supra-company apprenticeships ( [Überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung ÜBA](#)), the **Training Guarantee was extended, and additional funds were made accessible**

. Thus, the **number of apprenticeship positions in supra-company apprenticeships increased** by 3,000 to 14,500 places. This measure targets young people, willing to start an apprenticeship but unable to find an in-company apprenticeship position. More information can be found at the Public Employment Services (PES; [Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS](#)).

## Measures regarding information on employment

- *Online apprentice service*

The PES has created an **online apprenticeship service, encompassing all the important information on finding an apprenticeship** for young people and transmitting that to an expert advisor. As a result, personal interviews can be arranged with a preferred appointment.

- *Information line for coaching for apprentices and companies offering apprenticeships*

Established in April 2020, this **information line** handles the great influx of **COVID-19-induced questions concerning apprenticeships**.

## Adaptations in career guidance and counselling

Expansion of **low-threshold offers**: the low threshold offers - **Youth Coaching, AubsildungsFit** (core-measures) - are being strengthened in 2021.

## Interministerial COVID-19 taskforce on youth employment and apprenticeship training

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a joint taskforce on youth employment entitled 'Ensuring apprenticeship training for all young people' ("[Lehrausbildung für alle Jugendlichen sichern](#)" ) was set up by the [Federal Ministries of Labour](#) (in German), [Digital and Economic Affairs](#) (in German), Education, Science and Research and Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. The collaboration aims to **provide young people who have completed compulsory schooling with an in-company, inter-company or school-based training place** in order to close the gap of open places (in June 2020: a demand of 7.673 apprenticeship positions, with vacancies of only 4.962 amounts to a lack of around 2.700 positions for young people) that the pandemic has created. In a first step, **1.000 additional training positions were created**.