
**SURVEY RESULTS
ON EMPLOYER'S INTEREST FOR FLEXIBLE FORMS OF EDUCATION
WITHIN THE PT&SCHE PROJECT**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the first activities of the project was to examine the situation on the labor market and the needs of employers offered through new forms of education. Accordingly, Belgrade Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey among its members. The main objectives of this study were:

- Identify the real needs of employers in terms of defined profiles and competencies of staff,
- The establishment of real need and interest of employers for flexible forms of education and training.

The research on the interest of employers for flexible forms of education was conducted from March to May 2016, as online survey which was completed by 212 companies. The survey instrument was a questionnaire specifically designed for that study, which was divided into five parts:

- I General information
- II Study and work (Part time study)
- III Short cycle study (Short programs)
- IV Development plan
- V Specific competencies.

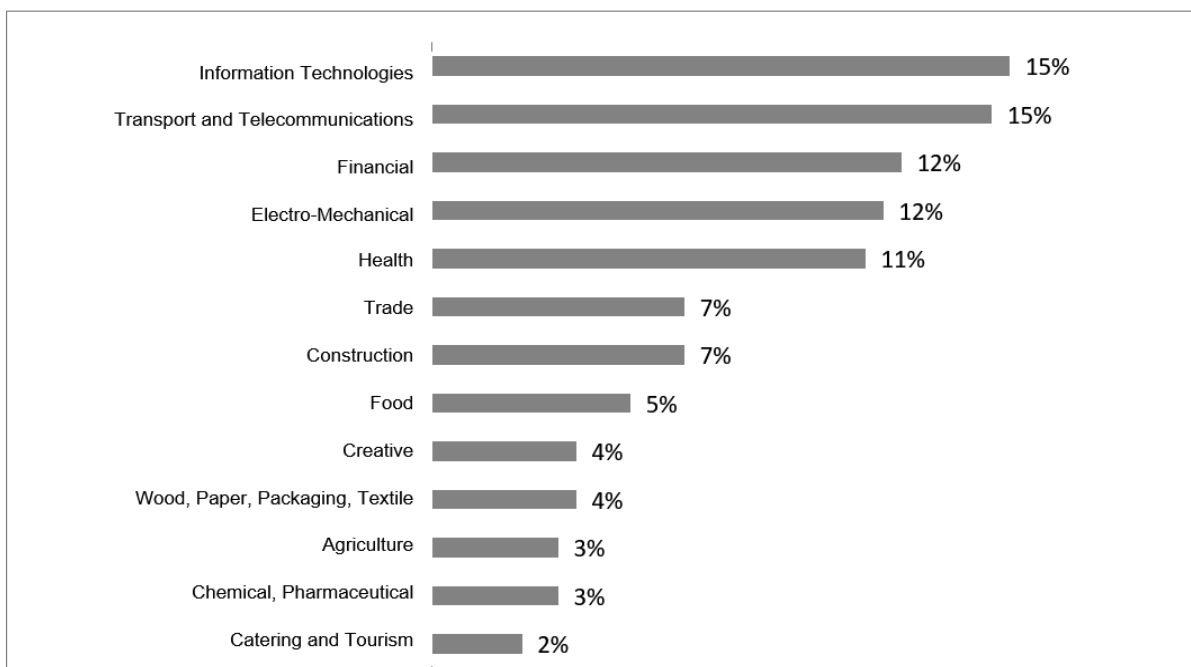
Data analysis was conducted by the project team of Belgrade Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the project team at the University of Novi Sad. The results are presented in tables and graphs. We performed the analysis obtained by crossing the answer depending on:

- sectors to whom company belongs (business is divided into three main sectors - the sectors of high technology, manufacturing and services);
- the size of the company (small, medium, large);
- job position of the participant in business organization (top management, middle management, other).

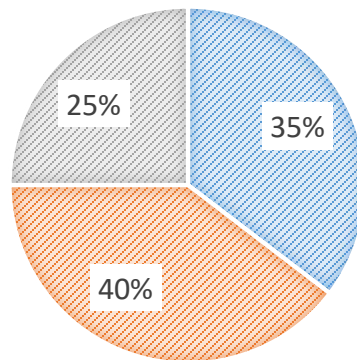
1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The answers to the first part of the questionnaire are presented graphically (charts 1-5) and tabular (Tables 1 and 2). The questions are designed to obtain basic information on the respondents, or on Companies representing.

Graph 1. Which industry do you mainly represent?



■ Top management ■ Middle management
■ Other



Graph 3. The size of your company

■ Small ■ Medium ■ Large

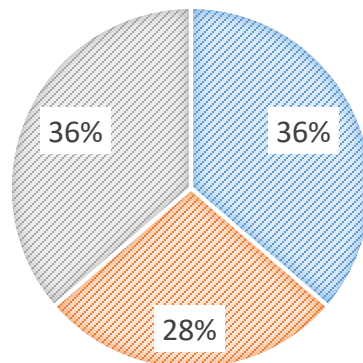
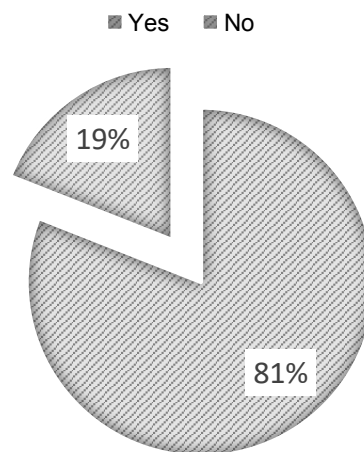


Table 1. Cross tab – size of the company and job position

		Level within the company			Total
		Other	Top management	Middle management	
The size of the company	Small	9	51	17	77
	Medium	16	8	34	58
	Large	28	16	33	77
Total		53	75	84	212

Graph 4. Does the labor market respond to all HR needs of your company?



Graph 5. Are there positions in your company that demand intermediate qualification level, i.e. a level between secondary and university education?

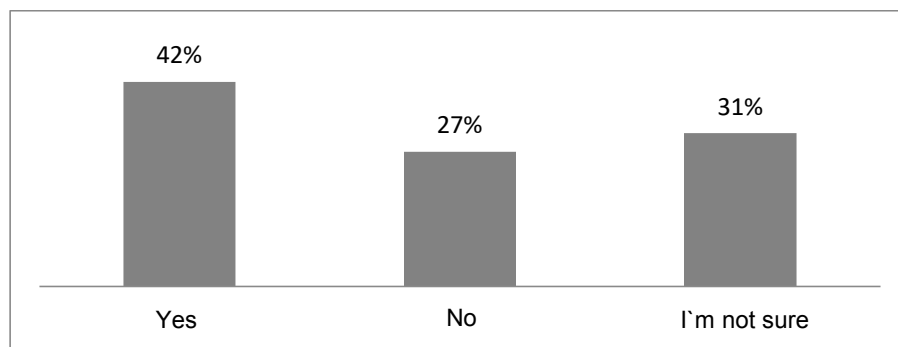


Table 2. Is there a need for new work profile of employees according to activities of your company? Cross tab according to the size of a company

		The size of the company			Total
		Small	Medium	Large	
Is there a need for new work profile of employees according to activities of your company?	Yes	37.7%	27.6%	31.2%	32.5%
	No	31.2%	44.8%	20.8%	31.2%
	I'm not sure	31.1%	27.6%	48.0%	36.3%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In relation to economic activity, which is core business in the company, the highest number of responses were obtained from the IT sector and transport and telecommunications, followed by the financial sector, the electro-mechanical industry and healthcare. Regarding the job position, most respondents belong to the middle level of management, followed by respondents from the highest levels of management, while the least responses were obtained from respondents who do not belong to the company's management system. The study equally represented commercial companies of all sizes (small, medium and large).

To the question "Does adequate personnel for all job positions in your business enterprise exist on the labor market?" 81% of respondents gave a negative answer. The survey results show that the greatest need for personnel was reported in economic profession as well as personnel from the IT sector. On the other hand, 42% of respondents said that there are working positions for which the necessary knowledge is on the level between secondary and higher education. This kind of positions is primarily for IT professionals, as well as certain professions in engineering and construction industries.

Almost equal distribution of answers was obtained on the question whether there is a need for new profiles. Depending on the size of the company, it can be noted that less than half of respondents (44.8%) from medium size companies gave a negative answer to this question. Also, almost half of respondents (48.0%) of large companies could not give a concrete answer to this question.

2. STUDY AND WORK (PART TIME STUDY)

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to provide answers of interest to "part time" studying or studying while working. At the beginning of the section a brief explanation was given

what this kind of study involves. Answers to this part of the questionnaire are also given in graphic (Charts 6 and 7) and tables (Tables 3-5).

Graph 6. Do your employees with a high school degree perform tasks that require university degree?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I'm not sure

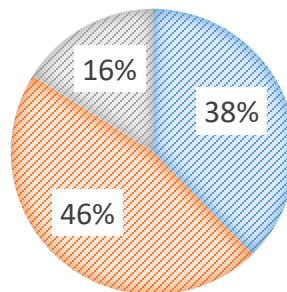


Table 3. Cross tab according to the type of industry

		Sector (type of industry)			Total
		Hi-tech	Production	Service	
Do your employees with a high school degree perform tasks that require university degree?	Yes	34.0%	46.2%	34.0%	37.7%
	No	36.2%	38.5%	56.0%	46.2%
	I'm not sure	29.8%	15.4%	10.0%	16.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Graph 7. Would your company support employees to study alongside the work? In what way?

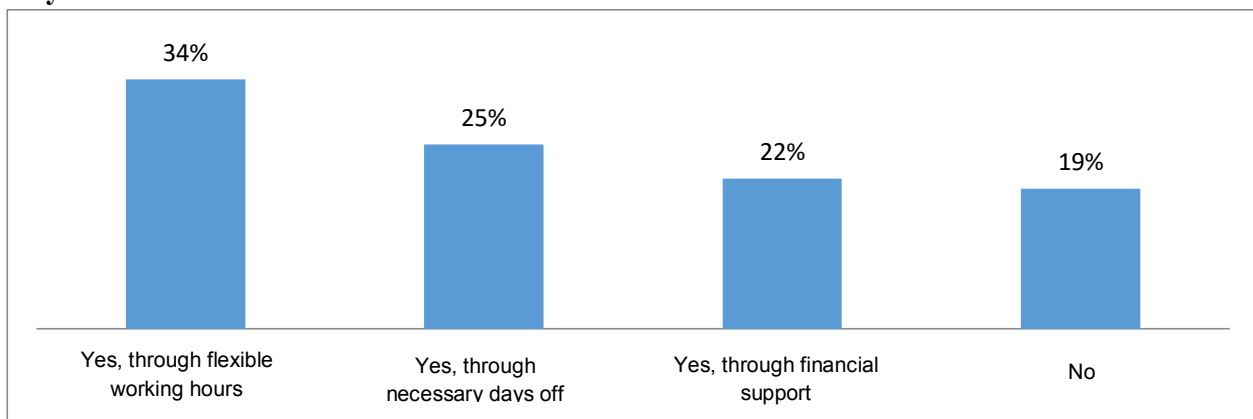


Table 4. Cross tab based on the size of company

	The size of the company			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Yes, through flexible working hours	53.2%	29.3%	19.5%	34.4%
Yes, through necessary days off	20.8%	31.0%	26.0%	25.5%
Yes, through financial support	11.7%	17.2%	32.5%	20.8%
No	14.3%	22.4%	22.1%	19.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Cross tab according to the employer position

	Level within the company			Total
	Other	Top management	Middle management	
Yes, through flexible working hours	26.4%	48.0%	27.4%	34.4%
Yes, through necessary days off	26.4%	21.3%	28.6%	25.5%
Yes, through financial support	18.9%	12.0%	29.8%	20.8%
No	28.3%	18.7%	14.2%	19.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Nearly half of respondents (46%) believe that on the positions that require higher education diploma are placed people with adequate qualifications. A slightly smaller percentage (38%) has a different opinion - employees with secondary diploma perform tasks that require higher education diploma.

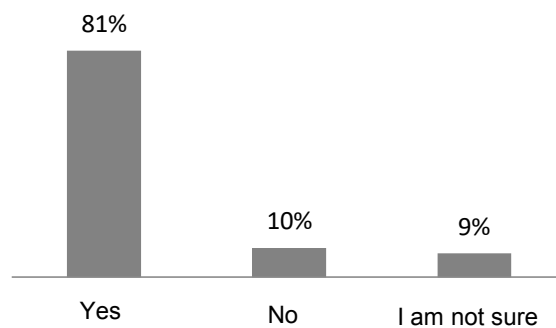
Further analysis revealed that almost equal percentage of affirmative answers was given according to the type of industry (slightly higher percentage in the manufacturing sector), while more than half of respondents (56%) in the services sector gave negative answer.

The majority of respondents (81%) believes that the company's management would support employer to study and work, through flexible working hours (34%) needed time off (25%), and even through the financial support (22%). Support for employer's learning through flexible working hours is most pronounced among small companies, as well as persons representing the highest level of management, while large companies are primarily willing to segregate some funding for such activities.

3. SHORT CYCLE STUDY (SHORT PROGRAMS)

At the beginning of this survey part, a brief explanation about the short cycles in education was given. Answers to questions are presented in graphs 8 and 9, and tables 6 and 7.

Graph 8. Are there working profiles in your company which require specialization within a field of knowledge?



Graph 9. Would your company support short cycle studying?

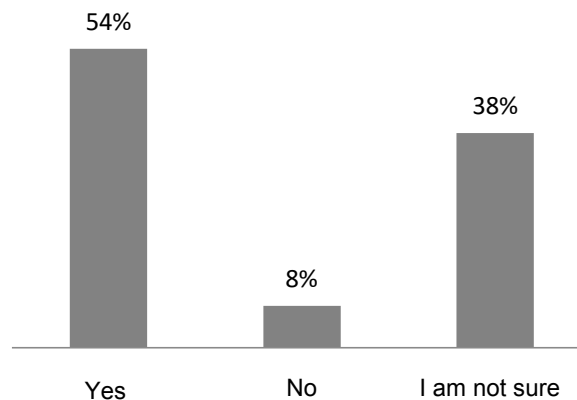


Table 6. Cross tab based on the size of company

		The size of the company			Total
		Small	Medium	Large	
Would your company support short cycle studying?	Yes	64.9%	48.3%	46.8%	53.8%
	No	3.9%	10.3%	9.1%	7.7%
	I am not sure	31.2%	41.4%	44.1%	38.5%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7. Cross tab based on the job position of the respondents

		Level within the company			Total
		Other	Top management	Middle management	
Would your company support short cycle studying?	Yes	35.8%	68.0%	52.4%	53.8%
	No	17.0%	6.7%	2.4%	7.7%
	I am not sure	47.2%	25.3%	45.2%	38.5%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Great need for highly specialized training is evident (81%). More than half of respondents (54%) believe that the acquisition of new knowledge through studying in short cycles would be supported by employers. The greatest need for highly specialized training is the areas of IT, finance, new technologies, and environmental protection. Further analysis revealed, that the most supporting enterprises for this kind of study were small businesses (64.9%), whereas the small (48.3%) and large enterprises (46.8%) have a similar approach to this issue. A large percentage of respondents belonging to the control system of companies, responded affirmatively to this question (the highest level of management 68.0%, middle level management 52.4%).

4. Development plan

This group of questions was designed to gain a better insight into the development capacities and plans of companies that participated in the survey. Answers to questions are presented graphically (Charts 10 and 11) and tabular (Tables 8-11).

Graph 10. Does your company plan the expansion of existing business program or the introduction of new types of work?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I am not sure

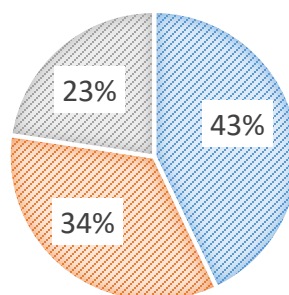


Table 8. Cross tab based on the size of company

		The size of the company			Total
		Small	Medium	Large	
Does your company plan the expansion of existing business program or the introduction of new types of work?	Yes	55.8%	32.8%	37.7%	43.0%
	No	36.4%	34.5%	32.5%	34.4%
	I am not sure	7.8%	32.7%	29.8%	22.6%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Graph 11. Does your company plan to recruit new employees?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I am not sure

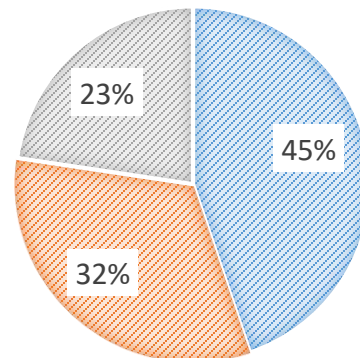


Table 9. Cross tab based on type of industry

		Sector (type of industry)			Total
		Hi-tech	Production	Service	
Does your company plan to recruit new employees?	Yes	51.0%	44.6%	42.0%	44.8%
	No	21.3%	27.7%	41.0%	32.5%
	I am not sure	27.7%	27.7%	17.0%	22.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10. Cross tab based on the size of company

		The size of the company			Total
		Small	Medium	Large	
Does your company plan to recruit new employees?	Yes	55.8%	41.4%	36.4%	44.8%
	No	29.9%	31.0%	36.4%	32.5%
	I am not sure	14.3%	27.6%	27.2%	22.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11. Cross tab according to the job (level) position

		Level within the company			Total
		Other	Top management	Middle management	
Does your company plan to recruit new employees?	Yes	34.0%	58.7%	39.3%	44.8%
	No	34.0%	30.7%	33.3%	32.5%
	I am not sure	32.0%	10.6%	27.4%	22.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

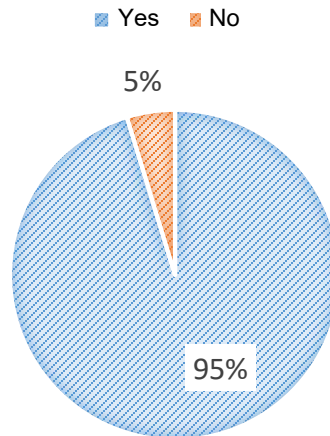
Almost half of respondents (43%) gave positive answer to the question about the existence of the plan of expanding the existing business program, as well as the introduction of new types of jobs, while less than a quarter of respondents (23%) gave negative answer. One-third of respondents (34%) do not know the company policy regarding this issue. A similar percentage of answers was obtained on the question of recruiting new employees, with slightly greater need for recruitment of new staff in the high tech sector and in small enterprises.

The need for business expansion is noticeable high in small enterprises, opposed to medium and large companies.

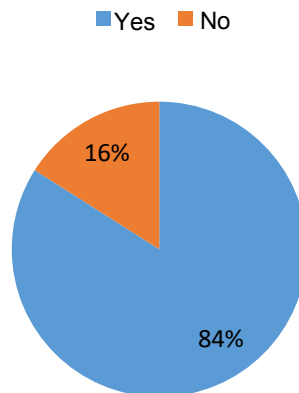
5. Specific competencies

The aim of this questionnaire part was to obtain information from the labor market on the needs for additional competencies of employees (foreign languages, computer competence, managerial and special skills). The answers are given in the graph (Charts 12-20) and tables (Table 12).

Graph 12. In addition to formal and vocational education, do you think that there is a need for the acquisition of some of the following competencies?



Graph 13. Foreign language



Graph 14. Which foreign languages?

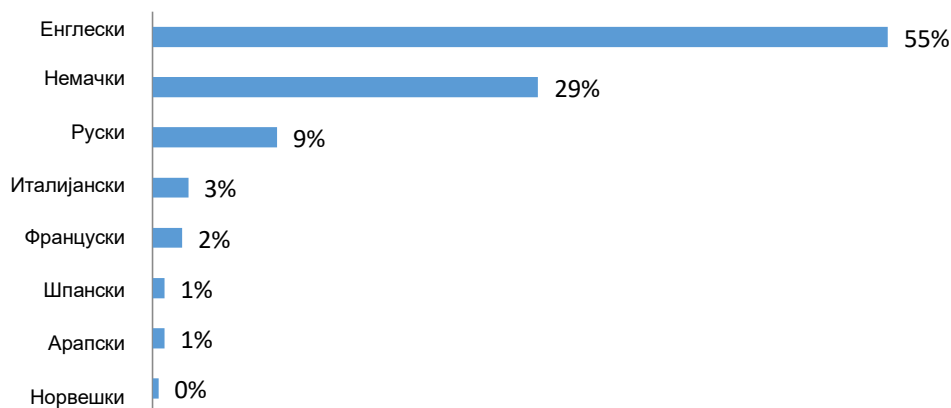
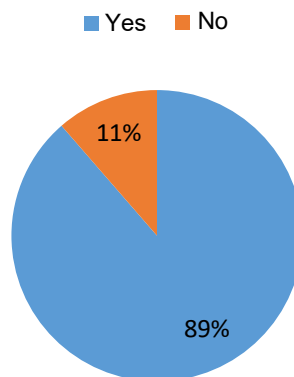


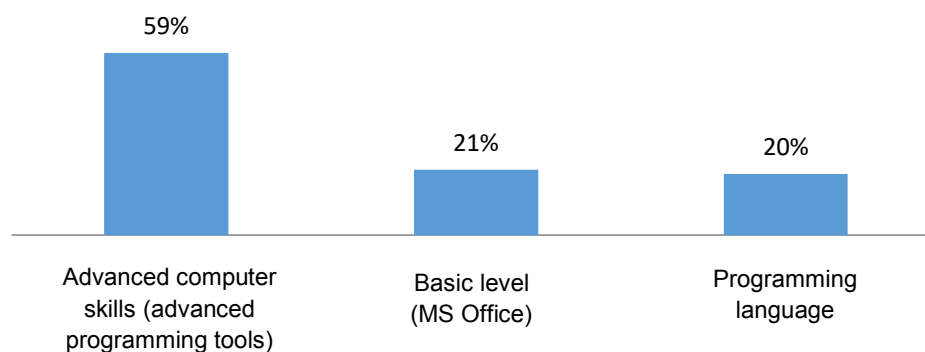
Table 12. Cross tab according to the job (level) position

		Level within the company			Total
		Other	Top management	Middle management	
Is there a need for learning the foreign language?	Да	90.2%	88.9%	75.3%	84.0%
	Не	9.8%	11.1%	24.7%	16.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

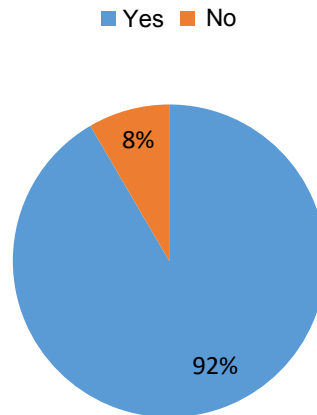
Graph 15. Computer skills



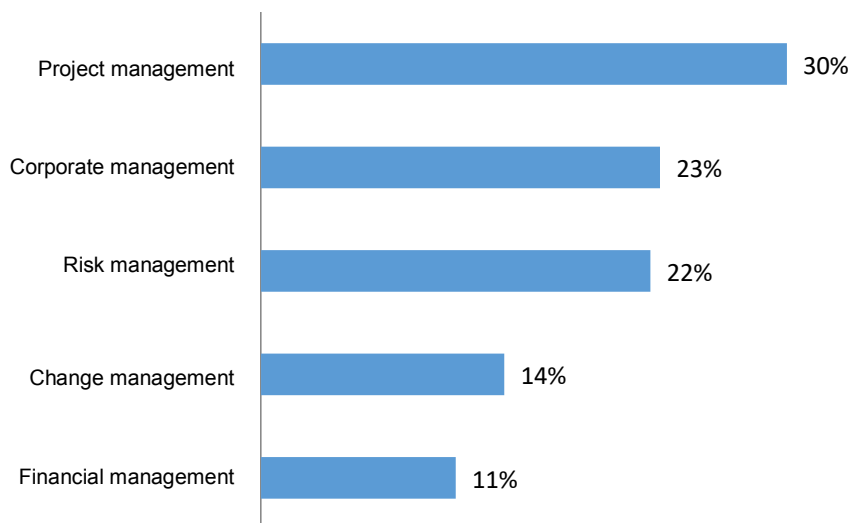
Graph 16. Level of computer competencies



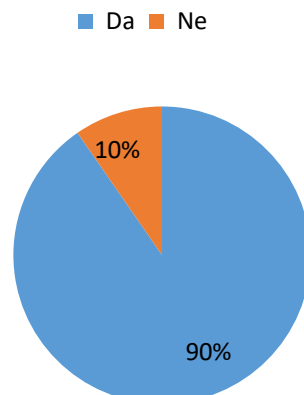
Graph 17. Management skills



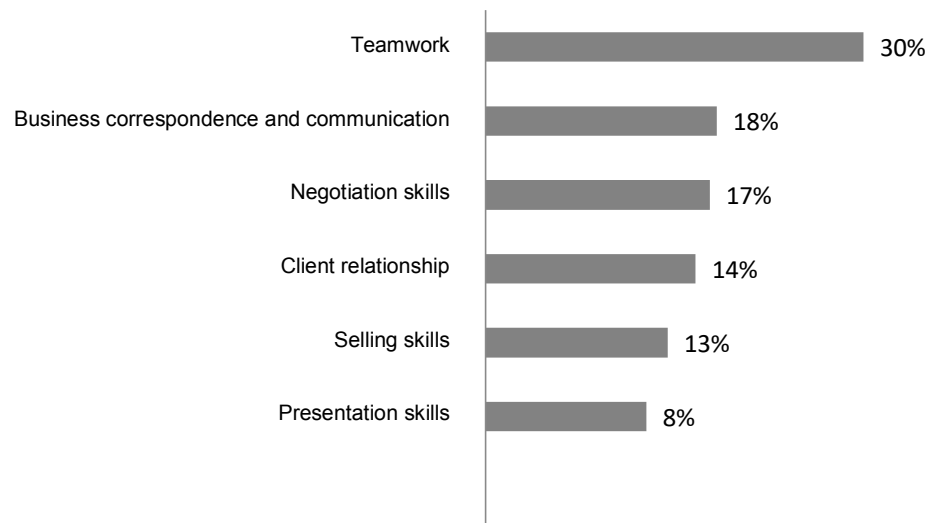
Graph 18. Which managerial skills need to be improved?



Graph 19. Special skills



Graph 20. Which special skills need to be improved?



CONCLUSION

There is a clear need for additional training and/or retraining employees within the companies. Companies are ready to invest in the education of their employees and thus bridge the difference between classical education and the needs of the market. There are small differences in needs depending on the size of the company, as well as to the corporate sector. As an overall conclusion the economy is interested to the introduction of new studying models, and well to provide a support in various ways to encourage employees for further education.

ROUND TABLE HELD AT BELGRADE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WITHIN THE PT&SCHE PROJECT

In addition to the survey, the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce has also organized round tables which aim was to, through talks and discussions with the relevant stakeholders, receive direct opinions from employers, or from the industry. Roundtables have enabled an insight into the real state of the economy needs in order to make programs and education strategy that will enable increased competitiveness of economic subjects and higher level of employment in the economy, as end-user of learning outcomes.

Suggestions and conclusions

Availability of information about the possible educational profiles. One of the conclusions was that during the project a web site should be formed that will give a detailed list of all courses that are "offered" with all the necessary information (where training takes place, who is offering training, what is the result of such training, what kind of certificate is acquired...). Market education exist and it should not be ignored and it is very important that there is a direct link between the service providers (educational institutions) and those who needed the service.

Better communication of all relevant stakeholders. It was concluded that there is insufficient correlation between the economy and education system. Mutual influence is necessary and strengthens the connection between the economy and business associations (chambers of commerce, employers' unions and other business and professional associations), education and training institutions and relevant ministries in order to harmonize educational programs with the needs of the economy. It is necessary to establish better communication between relevant ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy), higher education institutions and businesses. The economy must have a greater role in the development of curriculum.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It is essential during the development of education programs to clearly define the inputs and outcomes of learning. The national qualifications framework should balance the need with what the education system provides. NQF should be defined so that its structure will be formed primarily on the basis of information submitted by industry representatives. It will also allow institutions of higher education systems to define curricula based on real demands of the labour market.

Short courses. It was concluded that the introduction of educational programs through short cycles could solve some of the most acute problems in Serbia, such as lack of jobs (both for those with higher diploma and with a high school degree) and the lack of two-subject teachers. Shorter learning programs would allow the introduction into the real job more efficient.

Employers - opinions, experiences, problems. There is a clear company need for additional training and/or retraining of their employees. They are ready to invest in the education of their employees and thus bridge the difference between classical education and the needs of the market. Companies are willing to set aside certain funds for it, but very important is that this training is outside working hours. The labour market places emphasis on real knowledge and abilities, rather than formal education. Therefore, it is necessary to break the conservatism in education, because companies need knowledge and competence. There is a clear need and a request for an increase in the volume of practical training and the ability to practice with the employers, which in Serbia is not a legal obligation. On the other hand, in order to prevent the outflow of the labour force, it is

necessary to devise a legal framework that would protect employers who invest financial resources or otherwise stimulates the further education of their employees (working hours, days off ...). Also, employers who are willing to provide their employees additional education and acquiring competences, should be given incentives through certain tax breaks.

The state of education system in Serbia. There is a need for additional education of teaching staff, and the compatibility of their knowledge and curriculum with the latest global trends in the certain field. Experience and good practices of other countries should be the basis for defining the necessary changes in the educational system of Serbia.

One of the problems of the education system in Serbia is the process of accreditation that can last for up to two or three years, which in the field of information technology is a major problem, as this is an area where changes occur almost on a daily basis. Because of all this, the main goal of the implementation of the results of this project is to establish a dynamic, flexible system that is not burdened by complicated accreditations and bureaucracy and to be guided by the needs of the market.