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Communication on Engagement of the Association of the European Business (Belarus)

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement:

From: 5 April, 2021

To: 5 April, 2023.

The Association of European business is a Belarusian independent non-governmental association uniting leading European companies, which plan to do or do business in Belarus. The AEB seeks to boost the competitiveness of Belarusian business climate by promoting mutually beneficial cooperation between European and domestic businesses.

Our goals:

- helping European companies adapt to the Belarusian market and promoting their joint interests;
- creating a common platform for mutually beneficial partnerships of European and national companies;
- improving business climate in Belarus by building a dialogue between European, national companies and state authorities;
- providing analytical and expert support to European companies in Belarus;
- promoting Belarusian national traditions and culture in the business community;
- implementing initiatives of corporate social responsibility in the Belarusian business community.

The AEB has implemented two Corporate social responsibility initiatives from 2014-2015. There are the Job Shadow Days initiative and the project "Reducing unemployment – promoting entrepreneurship by combining business models and creativity into organic, young and promising businesses".

About **the Job Shadow Days** project:

In Belarus the gap between universities and business continues to grow. For a long time the companies in Belarus have told that it's impossible to get a prepared specialist, he needs to be reeducated.

There are the gaps between universities and business at different levels. For example, in practice curricula don't refer to practice. Disciplines don't correspond to the up-to-date demands of professions, the subjects are too overloaded with theory, the time-management for studying isn't proportional, etc.

Even students often complain that each year they study the same subjects under different names. Or, vice versa, because of the program reduction the minimum of academical hours is given for a discipline, which covers plenty of aspects. Business points at the fact that, for example, the level of a language proficiency is insufficient for work at the international market.

Students have absolutely logical questions like: why should I study at a university if

I don't satisfy the requirements of my future employer? Just for a diploma? Disappointment in the Belarusian higher education push young people to go abroad.

In 2015 Belarus joined the Bologna Process, and now curricula are actively being corrected, they are being squared with the curricula of the European universities. The challenge ahead the lecturers is to develop proper curricula in accordance with the demands of business and the tendencies of the world economy. To make such a transition, such a titanic transformation the Belarusian system of education needs to work closely with the representatives of the foreign business in particular and the main is really to make advance.

The Association of European business has promoted the CSR-initiative Job Shadow Days for three years as an example that companies and universities can easily start active cooperation to make curricula closer to the demands of business.

What is the Job Shadow Days? This is a popular on-the-job learning practice. It allows to familiarize a student with a profession by means of shadowing an experienced person (a mentor) in a real working environment during a standard work day. Being in a collective a "shadow" can learn more about a specific character of both a chosen job and others, to get important information and the main – to see with their own eyes what a job is like, often- in a company of your dream. The opportunity to go beyond theory and to plunge into practice allows many students to change their opinion about a job, to awake their interest in it. Sometimes having seen their job on the inside, a student comes to understanding

that the chosen field doesn't come up to expectations and that he wants to develop in another direction.

The companies, which have already participated in the initiative point out that the Job Shadow Days is an effective tool for a job training of employees themselves as well as for looking for new ones that share the corporate spirit of the company. Firstly, the appointment of a staff member a mentor boosts their self-esteem and motivation. Secondly, thanks to JSD companies can engage the best and motivated students. Thirdly, it's an opportunity to look at your job from another angle and to remember the beginning of the career. Finally, work with students is white PR for a company.

The idea of carrying out such an initiative in Belarus arose at the meeting of the AEB working group on staff training challenges (HR-committee of the AEB) for international companies in 2014. Since then, the AEB has been an organizer of the Job Shadow Days in our country. Moreover, the AEB is a member of the UN Global Compact Network in Belarus, and the JSD one of the corporate and social responsibility projects.

The Association of European Business has announced the eighth admission of mentors among the business community to participate in the action Job Shadow Days - 2019 in Minsk. Any top-manager or specialist, who represents a private company working in Belarus, can become a mentor (participation in the JSD is free both for mentors and students). To participate in the initiative each mentor should fill out an e-application and be ready to spend one day from 11 to 21 May with a student at the workplace, telling about the specific character of your job.

Every talented student of the 2d-4th courses of Belarusian universities specialized in marketing, law, economics / finance, IT, PR, HR, design, architecture and others can become a "shadow" of the Job Shadow Days.

As the experience of carrying out the Job Shadow Days shows, to obtain good results students don't always need longtime practice, accompanied and reinforced by a superfluous workflow. 1-2 days of cooperation of truly interested and open professionals and talented, hard-working, highly motivated students is necessary. After it universities can get clear answers to the questions on how it's necessary to change or correct a curriculum of specialists of varied employment- from humanitarians to digitheads.

Job Shadow Days

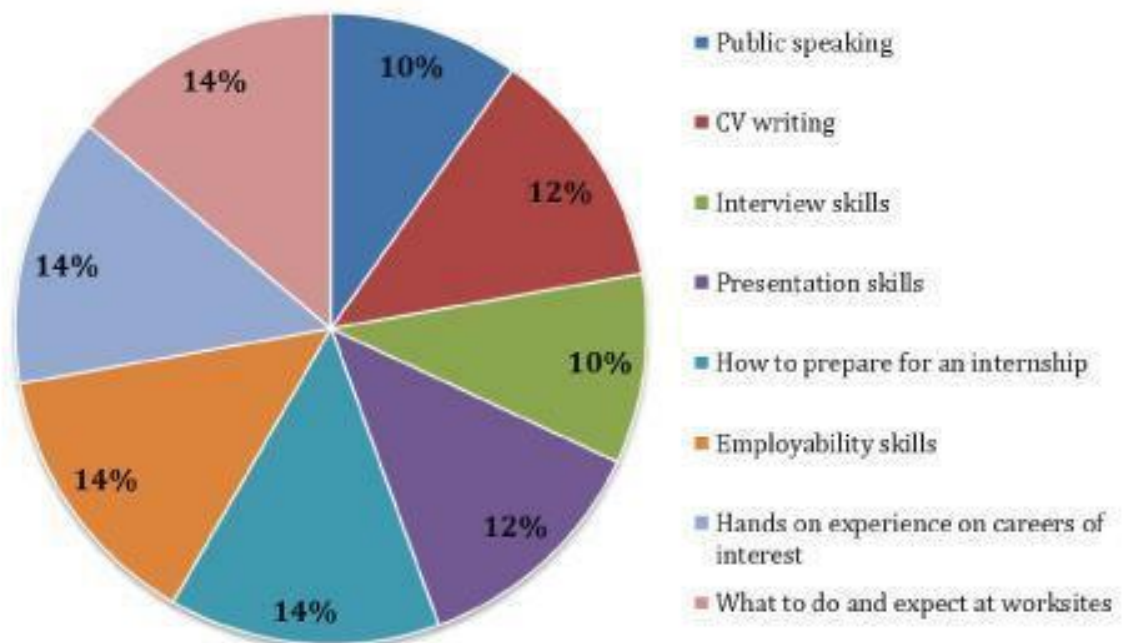
Allows students to:

- Gain firsthand experience
- Test their interest in the chosen field
- Test their knowledge in the field
- Correct their academic plan
- Expand their network
- Take advice from professionals for the future
- Learn about the company's brand and philosophy, career opportunities
- To land a job

Benefits for mentors:

- Boost of self-esteem and motivation
- Improvement of presentation skills
- Engagement of the best students with fresh ideas and opinions
- Obtaining of future efficient and loyal employees
- Opportunity to look at your job from a different angle
- Better understanding of each other's work
- Successful brand building by showing pro-active attitude to the development issue
- White PR and the goodwill of the student community to the company

Skills offered during job shadowing program



Feedback from participants.

We collected opinions of students-“shadows” about their internship in companies:

Job Shadowing - a great example proving that a picture worth a thousand words.

Irina Golubich:

And this is me again on Job Shadow Day :) This time I ended up in the legal firm Legaltax. I was lucky to be a "shadow" of great lawyers, and at the same time to learn a lot of new and interesting things. # JSDBelarus2019 s worth noting that this is a great opportunity to see what you want to do in the future and whether this profession really suits you. It was great! Thanks a lot to the organizers!

Pavel Tyshkevich:

I would like to thank the Association of European Businesses and DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Minsk for the internship opportunity. I am sure that this experience will be useful in professional development. # JSDBelarus2019

Ann Vysotskaya:

The Job Shadow Day program gave me the opportunity to dive into finance and consulting. For one day, I became a "shadow" of such interesting, knowledgeable people as Alexander Babuk, who is the managing partner and author of the MS Excel Professional Skills program, and Yan Malashenok, Project Manager at FIN.by - consulting and software solutions in the field of finance. Thanks to mentors, I learned how important financial consulting is, as it allows company owners to find effective management methods, evaluate investment projects, make economically sound decisions, and also got acquainted with financial models. During the day we had meetings with clients, discussing the further promotion of the program. Thanks for an interesting day # JSDBelarus2019 #finby #finby_career.

Margarita Kozlova:

Thanks to the Association of European Businesses for the opportunity, within the framework of the Job Shadow Days 2019 program, to become a part of FIN.by - consulting and software solutions in the field of finance. Previously, for me, as for many, consulting was associated with a consultant in a store. Now the understanding of the importance of financial consulting for business has come, since it is it that allows company owners to find effective methods of managing financial resources, make economically sound decisions, and evaluate investment projects. Among the consulting companies, FIN.by stands out favorably by the presence of corporate training programs in the field of IFRS, management

accounting, business planning and MS Excel. One of my mentors was Alexander Babuk, managing partner and author of the MS Excel Professional Skills program. The second mentor was Yan Malashenok, the project manager, and after spending a busy day with them, I can say that the day of a financier goes not only sitting at a computer. During the day, we had 3 meetings with clients, a discussion of the further promotion of the program for students and the opening of a corporate MS Excel training program. But despite such a load, FIN.by is actively developing its corporate culture. Therefore, working at FIN.by is not only interesting, but also fun! Being the "shadow" of such cool mentors, you know, Great things never came from comfort zone! Thank you very much to Alexander, Jan and Danuta, who tried hard and made the day eventful, interesting and useful! # JSDBelarus2019 #finby #finby_career

Polina Cherenkevich:

One day in the life of @pwcbelarus lawyers together with # JSDBelarus2019: - friendly team - a lot of work - joint recreation - negotiations - feedback - experience and new skills - many smiles and wonderful people Good job! I wish everyone the same Association of European Businesses ♥ □

Efremenko Evgenia:

I would like to express my gratitude to the Association of European Businesses for the opportunity to become a part of the travel company "Around the World" LLC for a day as part of the "Job Shadow Days 2019" project. Participation allowed me to get acquainted with the activities of the travel company, I received answers to all my questions, I was able to plunge into the friendly atmosphere of the team. # JSDBelarus2019

In 2022, the Association of European Businesses successfully implemented the Creazone project. Full name of the project is "**Reducing unemployment – promoting entrepreneurship by combining business models and creativity into organic, young and promising businesses**".

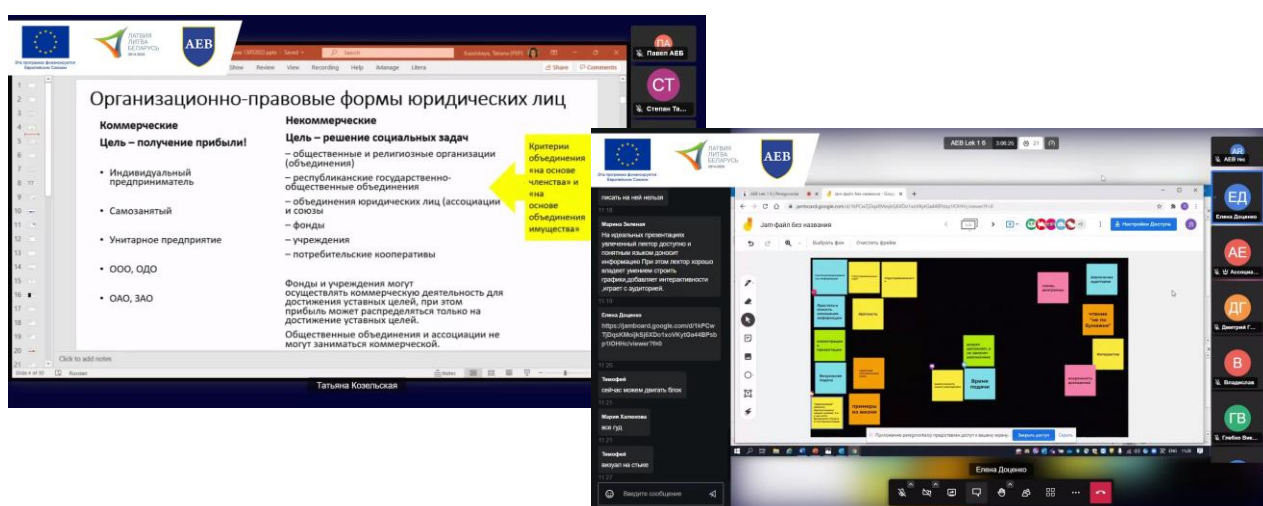
The online lectures were attended by 274 young people planning to start their own business. Top managers of leading Belarusian companies acted as speakers within the framework of the project.

Opportunities to participate in project activities were provided to all who apply and fit the target group. The geographic coverage of the project were distributed evenly between regions in Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus under the Program.

Taking into account the unfavorable epidemiological situation and in accordance with the Guidelines for the implementation of Projects during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project activities in Belarus were held online with the involvement of participants from Grodno, Vitebsk, Minsk, Mogilev regions and Minsk city.

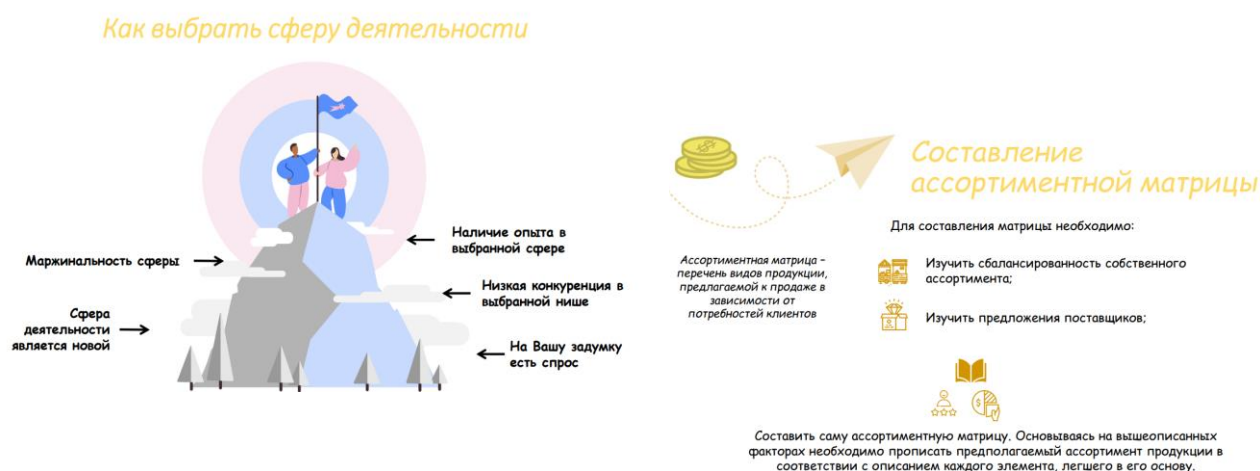
During the implementation period, 17 online lectures of the project were held on the following topics:

- "How to develop leadership skills?";
- "Design thinking approach and creative thinking in entrepreneurship";
- "Time management in entrepreneurship";
- "Life hacks of personal effectiveness";
- "Organization of remote work";
- "Stress Management in Entrepreneurship";
- "Perfect Presentation";
- "Business communication";
- "Buzzer team management";
- "PR and communications in business";
- "SMM: 10 steps to launch in social networks";
- "Active sales";
- "Strategy in conditions of uncertainty";
- "What is management: a systematic view of the discipline";
- "Analysis of the market and competitive environment";
- "Legal issues of registration and doing business, the choice of the main type of activity";
- "Sustainability: why it matters to a company".



Recordings of online lectures were published in the public domain on the YouTube channel of the Association of European Business.

Two research papers have been prepared on the topics "[How to open your own business](#)" and "[Marketing and marketing planning](#)". The results of the research were published in the public domain on the AEB website with the aim of involving young people in entrepreneurial activities through raising the level of knowledge.



Success stories:

- The State Committee for Standardization, the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities and the Ministry of Natural Resources supported the AEB proposals to include the possibility of using recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) in the production of packaging for food products into the technical regulation of the Customs Union "On the safety of packaging" TR CU 005/2011.
- The position of the AEB on the extension until the end of 2022 of the moratorium on the application of liability measures against business entities under Art. 13.12 "Violation of the procedure for the acquisition, storage, use in production, transportation, dispensing and sale of goods" of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Administrative Offenses for failure to ensure the use of electronic invoices in the circulation of goods marked with unprotected means of identification.
- The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, in Resolution No. 51 dated January 27, 2022, took into account the AEB proposal to lift restrictions on the import of other food products from the EU countries (FEA commodity nomenclature codes 1901 90, 2106 90). The raw materials for juice production included in these commodity groups could not be produced on the territory of the Republic of Belarus or supplied from countries not subject to restrictions.
- With the support of the Association of European Businesses, in accordance with the standard developed by PepsiCo, from 01.03.2023 restrictions on the use of recycled polymer in the production of food packaging are lifted in the Republic of Belarus.

These changes were approved by the accepted interstate standards:

- Interstate standard 33837-2022 "Polymer packaging for food products. General specifications";
- Interstate standard 32686-2022 "Polyethylene terephthalate bottles for food liquids. General specifications";
- Interstate standard R 70354-2022 "Meat and meat products. General requirements and test procedures to justify shelf life".