

skillset AND MATCH

CEDEFOP'S MAGAZINE
PROMOTING
LEARNING FOR WORK



 CEDEFOP

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SPECIAL ISSUE
ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING POST-2020

MAIN STORY:
A NEW DAY FOR VET

INTERVIEWS:
BLAŽENKA DIVJAK
ANJA KARLICZEK
NIKI KERAMEUS

ARTICLE: THE IMPORTANCE
OF BEING VOCATIONAL

**CEDEFOP**

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications.

We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.



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SPECIAL ISSUE

ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POST-2020

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Vocational education and training

centre stage

JÜRGEN SIEBEL

CEDEFOP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*VET is an enabler
of successful
transitions, so
that makes it more
important than ever*



As one decade of policy-making in vocational education and training (VET) comes to a close, another is starting to take shape. And while it does, an ambitious EU agenda for transforming our economies and societies has suddenly been hit by an unprecedented crisis. But will the coronavirus pandemic prove a catalyst for achieving the agenda's ambitious goals? Can the opportunities outweigh the threats?

Demographic shifts, digitalisation and the future of work, the greening of the economy, and the post-Covid recovery: all these transitions put VET centre stage. VET is an enabler of successful transitions, so that makes it more important than ever. This notion also underpins the joint Cedefop-ETF discussion paper titled *The importance of being vocational*, which is presented in this special issue of *Skillset and match*.

The potential role of VET as an enabler of the recovery from the pandemic was also centre stage at the joint Cedefop-ETF conference *Looking back – planning ahead*, held virtually on 30 June and 1 July. To illustrate the spirit and dynamism of the conference, we interview three of its high-level speakers: read how Blaženka Divjak, Anja Karliczek and Niki Kerameus, the Education Ministers of Croatia, Germany and Greece, respectively, reflect on VET's role and on how their presidencies and national initiatives have, and will continue to, put VET centre stage.

Three themes emerged from the conference discussions. First, we need to foster continuous VET, not at the expense of initial VET but based on and linked to it. Second, we must advance skills intelligence to inform policy-makers and VET actors, making VET systems more agile and resilient. Finally, we must further boost cooperation within the vocational education and training community.

If you are part of this community, and as there will be ample need and opportunity for cooperation, please make use of it! ■

Teachers and trainers: the driving force of VET



© Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia

BLAŽENKA DIVJAK

MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION, CROATIA



We will continue to enable career advancement and to incentivise teacher participation in continuous learning. This will make sure they are ready for new challenges

Croatia held the rotating EU Presidency, for the first time since joining the Union, in the first semester of 2020. This was a time of setting new targets for European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). Despite the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, the Presidency pushed ahead with an agenda that featured VET as a priority. Croatian Minister for Science and Education Blaženka Divjak presented this work at the Cedefop/ETF conference on enhancing the European cooperation in VET (pp. 12-15) and gave *Skillset and match* an overview of what was achieved.

How did VET feature in the Croatian Presidency priorities,

and how do you see its future in the new cycle of post-2020 policy targets following the coronavirus pandemic?

Our priorities were the teachers and trainers of the future, the role of education in the European Semester, and the post-2020 framework for European cooperation in education and training, mobility and brain circulation. Vocational education was represented across these priorities, especially in the Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future, with its focus on the shortage of VET teachers and their demanding role. Students must have better career opportunities and holistic education that includes digital skills, civic education and interdisciplinary training in sustainable development and entrepreneurship. We are at the beginning of a new cycle of post-2020 policy targets, and the

coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on education processes and future economic trends. The meetings of Directors General for Vocational Education and Training and the Presidency conference have highlighted the evolving role of teachers and trainers, especially the need for new hybrid approaches to working in VET institutions and companies. They also emphasised the importance of upskilling and reskilling. In the new cycle there must be a strong role for centres of excellence in VET and their networks at EU level.

VET has traditionally played a major role in your country and there has been reform in recent years, including the introduction of centres of competence from 2022. What do you aim to achieve with these centres?



In July 2018, we appointed 25 purpose-built regional centres of competence, designed as part of national/regional arrangements for vocational excellence. They are to act as regional focal points in charge of establishing high quality cooperation with other VET schools and stakeholders in the sector. They are characterised by innovative learning models, teaching excellence, high-quality infrastructure and technology, constructive and creative cooperation with social partners, public sector, businesses, research and higher education institutions, as well as cooperation with similar centres across Europe. Their activities will include regular VET programmes, teacher training and lifelong learning programmes, and other forms of formal and non-formal education. Once they are fully functional, they will provide a comprehensive set of services that go far beyond regular education in a VET system. The first centres are in tourism and hospitality, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and computing, agriculture, and health. A network of regional centres of competence will be expanded to other sectors, following evaluation of the work of those appointed so far and taking into account regional development plans. Besides that, we have started with a dual education system in parallel to the classical one and overall modernisation of VET curricula.

Your new system of continuing professional development rewards teachers for their creativity and engagement. How can teachers and trainers, who had to adapt to digital

technologies overnight during the pandemic, be equipped for the new challenges?

Teachers and trainers are the driving force of education and training. They prepare individuals to live, learn and work in the world of today, as well as to create and lead future changes. During the Croatian Presidency, Council conclusions were adopted on European teachers and trainers for the future. These highlighted their crucial role in preparing individuals for future jobs, promoting and developing basic skills and key competences, and teaching up-to-date vocational or technical skills and knowledge. They also cooperate with trainers in companies on work-based learning and apprenticeship. We organised a virtual conference with over 1 600 participants from 46 countries. Extensive education reform in Croatia is introducing a huge change across pre-tertiary education, including overall change of curricula, large investment in school equipment, continuous professional development of teachers, and digital transformation of schools. We've also introduced systematic rewards for the 500 best teachers each year and new promotion criteria to emphasise the value of quality, motivated and innovative individuals. These teachers transfer their knowledge and skills to their colleagues at regular professional seminars, digital

environment and actual. All this helped in the swift and successful change to distance education demanded by the pandemic. We will continue to enable career advancement and to incentivise teacher participation in continuous learning. This will make sure they are ready for new challenges.

Cedefop has been working with Croatian stakeholders since the country joined the EU. How helpful can an organisation like Cedefop be in your effort to improve VET, skills and qualifications?

This positive cooperation started through the ReferNet network, which is a unique source of information on national VET systems and policies. It enabled us, as a new member, to understand better the legal framework and institutions involved in the development of VET and adult learning in each country and to monitor developments and trends in vocational education policies. An organisation like Cedefop gives valuable support in developing a VET system. The Cedefop thematic country review of apprenticeships in Croatia was also important. Such reviews are a starting point for improving VET and adult learning programmes, showing all stakeholders how education policies need to be created and changed to achieve excellent VET. ■

Time for **green** and **digital** innovations in VET



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ANJA KARLICZEK

FEDERAL MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH,
GERMANY

“ *The Osnabrück meeting is our opportunity to outline the steps that need to be taken and obtain commitment from the main stakeholders* ”

This autumn marks another milestone for European vocational education and training (VET) with the process of setting the post-2020 policy targets reaching its climax. The German EU Presidency is coordinating the process and the country's Federal Minister for Education and Research, Anja Karliczek, has been tasked with helping make things happen. Ms Karliczek was a speaker at the joint Cedefop/ETF conference on enhancing European cooperation in VET and talked to *Skillset and match* about her vision.

VET's future policy targets feature in the Presidency programme and you will chair a meeting of ministers later this month in Osnabrück to agree

on concrete steps for closer cooperation. How important is this process for VET?

The process and the upcoming meeting are very important to me. During the German Presidency, I will highlight the importance of vocational training for European society and our common market. Germany has profited from having a strong VET system for many years. Young people, in particular, have been given great opportunities to acquire the skills they need to get a good job. VET lays the foundation for many to start their careers quickly as qualified professionals. Given the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, I want to share this experience and see what we can learn from it at European level. The Commission proposed an important set of initiatives at the beginning of our Presidency. Now, Member States and the

social partners will have to make tangible contributions to support green and digital innovations in VET. The Copenhagen Process is the right format for this: it includes representatives from small and medium-size enterprises, from industry and from trade unions. The Osnabrück meeting is our opportunity to outline the steps that need to be taken and obtain commitment from the main stakeholders.

How has your experience as an apprentice at Deutsche Bank at a younger age helped your professional career? Would you recommend a similar path to a young person in today's learning and labour market environment?

Employees with VET qualifications can take advantage of a great number of career development opportunities today. Germany has done a lot to enhance the



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situation in recent years. The new Erasmus programme and the flagship actions of the new skills agenda create many promising opportunities for VET learners across Europe.

Although Germany is a country with a long apprenticeship tradition, the number of companies providing training, and of young people looking for apprenticeships, has been falling. Why is that and how can it be addressed?

You are right that the percentage of companies offering dual apprenticeships has fallen slightly in recent years. Around 500 000 dual and 200 000 school-based apprenticeships were offered last year. We are working hard to ensure a sufficient supply of apprenticeships, even during this year's coronavirus pandemic. One reason for the general trend is the demographic development in Germany: we have fewer school graduates. Nevertheless, we must keep demonstrating how attractive VET is and that it can compare with university studies. High-quality training programmes are needed in the future. In June, the Federal

Government adopted a national programme to support the training efforts of companies which have been hit hard by the pandemic. The federal budget offers allowances of EUR 2 000 to EUR 3 000 for companies that continue, or even expand, their training programmes. This targeted and efficient measure will particularly benefit small companies. Prospects are excellent, especially in the skilled trades, and VET candidates are very much appreciated. Together with my colleagues from the Länder and the social partners, I am part of the National Alliance for Apprenticeships. We lobby hard for our dual system.

How helpful can an organisation like Cedefop be in the efforts to make VET fit for the digital era?

Cedefop is an important institution in the European VET architecture. Not only does the agency provide valuable input to Commission initiatives – such as the new proposal for a Council recommendation on VET – but it also inspires national stakeholders. Some ideas have been controversial, like the

introduction of European core profiles, while some services are simply indispensable. In my view, this includes Cedefop's work to study the possible development of the European training market. Some sectors of industry will certainly have to reinvent themselves, particularly the automotive and aeronautical industries. Other sectors of service and industry will undergo extensive digitalisation and it is likely that all remaining businesses will see a transformation of their business models towards sustainability and climate action. This is where you come in. We need Cedefop to keep a close eye on these developments. The ReferNet cooperation is excellent but we need even stronger ties between Cedefop and the national agencies. ■

More on Cedefop's ReferNet network of institutions



More information about the Osnabrück meeting and the latest in the VET post-2020 process on the Cedefop website



Planning

more

attractive VET



© Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece

NIKI KERAMEUS



Our strategic goal is to upgrade VET from the level of a forced solution for a few to a conscious choice for many

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS,
GREECE

Vocational education and training (VET) has traditionally been second choice for young people in Greece, Cedefop's host country. University degrees continue to be more appealing to students and their parents, despite record youth unemployment levels in recent years.

Greek Minister for Education and Religious Affairs Niki Kerameus spoke at the joint Cedefop/ETF conference about her plan to overhaul VET and how European cooperation is crucial to the sector's future: 'In recent years all EU national systems have undergone substantial changes for the benefit of learners, economies and societies. But unemployment, underemployment, mismatches between people's actual skills and the needs of the labour market, flat and falling incomes all undermine the efforts, the cohesion and the social models of European societies. The biggest challenge many European countries face is how we change the mentality, the perception of VET. There is no better way of doing this than having all EU countries working together.'

In an interview with *Skillset and match*, Ms Kerameus outlined potential steps towards more attractive VET in Greece.

VET has faced many problems in Greece over the years, from lack of interest on the part of young people and their parents to lack of resources. An effort is being made to modernise VET and make it appealing to the next generation. How is this going?

Making VET more attractive for young people and adults is still at the heart of many EU and national policy initiatives, including Greece. Over the years, and despite the great challenges it faced during the financial crisis, Greece has remained focused on the five priority areas for VET that were agreed within the Copenhagen process, aiming to enhance vocational education and training. Special attention has been paid to apprenticeships to make them an equitable education choice for VET learners according to their skills and interests. Apprenticeships produce graduates with work experience, helping to reduce youth unemployment and alleviate social inequalities. Greece is also focused on ensuring quality,



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developing a holistic approach that responds to education and socioeconomic needs, increasing VET awareness and attractiveness. Regarding access to VET and qualifications, we have produced the Hellenic qualifications framework, a comprehensive national qualifications framework. And we are making efforts to increase the share of key competences in the curriculum framework and to take them into account in assessment practices. Regarding VET teacher development, we have prioritised strengthening the current legal framework and programmes and introducing coherent educational and pedagogical policies, systematically upgrading training methods.

Education reform is now underway at all levels in Greece. How is it going to affect VET?

In the coming months we will be presenting a new legal framework regulating VET and lifelong learning in Greece in a more systematic, comprehensive and cohesive way. Our strategic goal is to upgrade VET from the level of a forced solution for a few to a conscious choice for many.

We have several strands to our strategy.

- Joint strategic planning of vocational education and training to avoid overlap and to achieve optimum response to the Greek economy's needs.
- Reinforcing vocational education schools (EPAL) and vocational training institutes (IEK) in terms of curricula, technical equipment and teacher training.

- Creating the first-ever model vocational education schools and pilot vocational training institutes.
- Directly linking vocational education and training and lifelong learning with the labour market, using labour market diagnosis and tracking of VET graduates.
- Certifying and validating non-formal and informal learning.
- Early career counselling and vocational guidance, as well as opportunities for internships in collaboration with local businesses.

Cedefop has been working with its host country in various areas of VET in recent years (qualifications frameworks, governance, apprenticeships). How helpful is Cedefop's presence in Greece?

Cedefop plays a significant role in portraying the value of VET in Greece: promoting apprenticeships and work-based learning more generally, key competences, adult learning, lifelong guidance and counselling, and preventing early leaving from education and training. These initiatives, undertaken and supported by Cedefop, have been instrumental in our efforts to establish VET within Greek society. ■

Cedefop reports and information
on vocational education and
training in Greece



The importance of being vocational

Cedefop and the ETF have published a joint discussion paper on the challenges and opportunities for vocational education and training in the next decade

The post-2020 European policy framework on vocational education and training (VET) is being debated at a time of unprecedented challenge arising from the coronavirus pandemic. As always in times of economic crisis, VET can prepare people for the transformation of the economy that inevitably will accompany the unfolding crisis and the following recovery. Investing in VET is today also the best option to inspire confidence in European citizens.

Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) have published a joint discussion paper on the challenges and opportunities for VET in the

next decade. The paper was presented at a high-level conference on enhancing European cooperation in VET on 30 June and 1 July (see pp. 12-15), and it formed part of the two EU agencies' contribution to the upcoming Osnabrück Declaration on post-2020 VET. Both agencies have been part of the declaration drafting committee.

CHANGES GATHERING SPEED

The discussion paper argues that, irrespective of the consequences of the crisis, job displacement due to technological and other structural changes is happening and will continue to accelerate.

Labour market transitions are becoming increasingly frequent and career paths less linear, while work content and its organisation are changing. People and employers need increasingly complex combinations of interpersonal, entrepreneurial and career management skills.

Europe is committed to meeting some important political challenges, including the greening of the economy and delivering new and more effective rights for all citizens. There is a positive association between skills development, innovation, productivity, employability and job satisfaction. Redirecting the economy towards human-capital



intensive economic activities facilitates green and employment-rich growth.

CONTINUING VET IS KEY

In this rapidly changing environment, almost half of the entire adult population in the EU is in potential need of upskilling or reskilling. While further developing initial VET (IVET) should remain an essential aim, European policy needs to strengthen continuing VET (CVET) to ensure that the new job opportunities created by the transformations of the economy will outstrip job displacement.

All adults, employed or jobless – and irrespective of their qualifications and socio-economic background – need to have the opportunity to develop their skills to keep up with rapidly changing work realities, so they can succeed in their personal lives. Businesses need to be able to satisfy their skills demands to remain competitive, so they have incentives to invest in training both at entry level and for the existing workforce.

While CVET is an integral part of broader lifelong learning systems, it requires specific organisation and governance arrangements that cannot be fully achieved through the simple extension of formal IVET systems. As a long-term goal, a European skills guarantee could make

CVET the new norm for all adults, supported by initiatives such as individual learning accounts.

ENGAGING ENTERPRISES

Establishing CVET as a system also implies expanding its role far beyond delivering training. Expansion of work-based learning is critical to making CVET more effective and increasing participation. Systematic diffusion of structured work-based learning in CVET requires engaging workplaces and enterprises on a large scale, helping them to become learning-conducive work environments that systematically demand and supply training.

Promoting CVET is also important, helping people and enterprises to be aware of their needs, informed of the learning opportunities available, and more ready to invest in learning. Ensuring synergies between the different areas of policy supporting CVET will mean integrating financial incentives, guidance, validation, outreach policies and professional development of VET trainers and mentors.

A EUROPEAN VET AREA

Well-functioning CVET systems are directly influenced by the way in which IVET is organised, the latter being the foundation on which the former can build new knowledge and skills in

a lifelong perspective. Policy and cooperation should continue toward a ‘European VET area’ and the implementation of a forward-looking strategy on transparency of qualifications, advancing permeability, and developing progression routes to higher qualification levels.

Promoting the development of a new generation of labour market and skills intelligence is also essential to ensuring VET’s relevance and responsiveness; this needs to help shape programmes and inform practice. Big data based on job advertisements, CVs, patents and scientific papers, learning opportunities on the internet and the use of artificial intelligence can produce meaningful and actionable intelligence when combined with traditional data sources.

Skills governance arrangements can incentivise effective collaboration between all key players. Introducing or reinforcing them can set the stage for a more strategic approach to VET and skills development and contribute to strengthening feedback loops between VET and the labour market. ■

Cedefop/ETF joint
discussion paper



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A new day for European vocational education and training

A Cedefop/ETF high-level conference highlighted that current economic and societal changes – digitalisation, green deal, demographic shifts, economic uncertainty – bring VET to the fore as a flexible means of preparing people for a changing world of work

The joint Cedefop/European Training Foundation (ETF) virtual conference on enhancing European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) was an important opportunity ‘to renew our commitment to European cooperation’, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit told participants. Over 150 experts, stakeholders, European Commission, government and social partner representatives joined forces to debate the role and future of VET at a time of unprecedented challenge due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The high-level conference discussed the post-2020 European policy framework on 30 June and 1 July, timing that symbolised the transfer of the six-month rotating EU Presidency from Croatia to Germany. The education ministers of both countries were invited to speak about their VET priorities. It was Croatia’s first Presidency since the country joined the EU in 2013. Germany, the current holder, has the task of shaping and taking forward the EU’s strategy on VET cooperation for the next

decade. ‘The clock is ticking, and it is our turn to push the European project forward,’ as German Federal Minister for Education and Research Anja Karliczek put it.

Croatian Minister for Science and Education Blaženka Divjak spoke about the benefits of vocational education, focusing on the role of teachers and trainers. Among the speakers was also the Greek Minister for Education and Religious Affairs, Niki Kerameus, representing Cedefop’s host country. She argued that national VET systems have undergone substantial changes for the benefit of learners and that making VET more attractive is at the core of many national policies.

FORWARD-LOOKING PERSPECTIVE

Starting with the results of the two EU agencies’ monitoring of the 2015-20 cycle of cooperation on VET – the Riga process – discussions focused on how the lessons learned can be applied to meet the challenges of, and make the most of the opportunities for, VET in the next decade.



Enhancing European cooperation in VET

looking back - planning ahead

30 June and 1 July 2020
Virtual conference

#VETconference2020

WORKSHOP 1 TRANSPARENCY AND PERMEABILITY FOR STRONGER VET

SPECIAL PRESERVE and in-service-training for TEACHERS and TRAINERS on GREENING AND DIGITAL SKILLS to keep up with and ahead of the TRANSFORMATION

COMPREHENSIVE NQFs have INCREASED
Common understanding and TRUST among QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS

VET will become AGE OPEN instead of AGE NEUTRAL in the future
LESS clear-cut BORDERS and MORE interaction of IVET and CVET
A CULTURE OF VET IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP ITS POTENTIAL
Flexibility in teaching and training Provision

INVEST in EMPLOYEE TRAINING to keep the SOCIAL PILLAR in FOCUS - the principles of the SKILLS GUARANTEE Will need to be put into practice and EMBRACE ALL WORKERS including in SMEs SELF EMPLOYED GIG WORKERS

FOUR WORKSHOPS EIGHT KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO VOTE ON

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS and EXPERIENCED TRAINERS including HYBRID MODELS of TEACHERS and TRAINERS who work in BOTH VET INSTITUTIONS and COMPANIES

FLEXIBLE and ATTRACTIVE LEARNING PATHWAYS ALSO EXPANDING VET TO HIGHER LEVELS

WORKSHOP 2 VET FOR LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

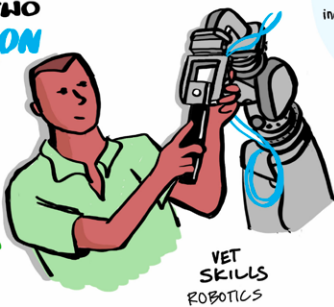
VET POLICY TOP VOTED MESSAGE
A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH IS NEEDED to enable EVERY INDIVIDUAL to have access to LIFE LONG LEARNING and SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

UNDEPINNED by LEARNER CENTRICITY and QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES STRONG STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT COOPERATION and PARTNERSHIPS at all LEVELS and PHASES



DAY TWO SESSION FIVE

LOOKING AHEAD! DISCUSSION IN FOUR PARALLEL WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP 3 VET AND SKILLS FOR THE GREEN DEAL AND NEW DIGITAL AGE

WORKSHOP 4 EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

@chapplecartoons.co.uk

Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel stressed that ‘policy efforts and cooperation should continue toward a “European VET area”, adopting a forward-looking perspective and ensuring attractive, inclusive and relevant initial VET systems for both learners and companies.’ His ETF counterpart, Cesare Onestini, outlined the agency’s work with countries in the EU neighbourhood: ‘They share the same aspirations as EU Members to put human capital development at the core of their growth and prosperity agendas. In the reaction to the pandemic crisis we see some promising responses but also challenging trends, and the need to focus further on promoting training for excellence and inclusion: a key leverage towards economic development.’

The conference highlighted that current economic and societal changes – digitalisation, the green deal, demographic shifts, economic uncertainty – bring VET to the fore as a flexible means of preparing people for a changing world of work. Continuing VET (CVET) is critical for upskilling and reskilling EU citizens and creating a dynamic workforce, ready to respond to the economic and societal challenges ahead. This will aid smooth transition to a digital and greener economy.

FOCUS ON CVET

The debate was supported by a joint Cedefop/ETF discussion paper (see pp. 10-11) prepared to inform the next steps in VET policy-making at EU level. Presenting the paper, Cedefop Deputy Director Mara Brugia argued that ‘the focus on CVET is an acknowledgement of the important work done to reinforce our initial VET systems over the past decades. CVET policies need to go together with support measures, including targeted outreach policies, coordinated guidance and validation, and flexible financial and other support to learning.’

Commissioner Schmit stressed the importance of good data in informing good policies, and praised Cedefop’s in-depth analyses on skills development and VET, particularly its unique skills forecasts, ‘a goldmine to tap into’. European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas, who spoke at the closing session, also highlighted the value of Cedefop and ETF work, saying that ‘there would have been no progress since Riga without the research and support provided by the two agencies.’

SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT

Both EU officials referred to the newly announced European Commission package to support youth



Now, our collective focus should be on delivery. The contribution of Cedefop and the ETF will be crucial in this respect

employment. This aims to make systems more resilient for the future and boost employment by acting on all fronts: reinforcing the youth guarantee, future-proofing VET and renewing the impetus for apprenticeships. The Commission also presented the European skills agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

The skills agenda sets ambitious, quantitative objectives for upskilling (improving existing skills) and reskilling (training in new skills) to be achieved within the next five years. Its 12 actions focus on skills for jobs by partnering with Member States, companies and social partners to work together for change, by empowering people to embark on lifelong learning, and by using the EU budget as a catalyst to unlock public and private investment in people's skills. The new Europass platform was launched as the agenda's first implemented action.

A proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, another of the 12 agenda actions, was also published. The proposal takes a fresh approach to making VET more modern, attractive for all learners, flexible and fit for the digital age and green transition. ■

Cedefop/ETF conference: Enhancing European cooperation in VET – Looking back, planning ahead (Video on demand: watch the recorded conference sessions)



For the latest in the post-2020 EU VET policy process, visit the dedicated page on the Cedefop website



European Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training



MESSAGES FROM COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SCHINAS' SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE

We all agree that this is a moment when we can proclaim that Europe badly needs a skills revolution. The new youth employment support package is novel, ambitious, measurable and inclusive. It gives a very clear signal that we are ready for change and we bring a new mindset in the way training and skills development are conceived. The times we now live in require much more than looking at training as a box-ticking activity. They require skilling for a job, an end-to-end approach rooted in the needs of the economy. This is what we are trying to achieve.

The Council recommendation for VET aims to make vocational systems fit for the challenge of recovery and the transitions ahead. This is an opportunity for Cedefop and the ETF, who have an institutional role in bringing VET to the next level and making it more attractive, relevant and agile.

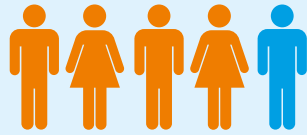
Now, our collective focus should be on delivery. The contribution of Cedefop and the ETF will be crucial in this respect. People must be better informed as to what skills will be trending tomorrow and be geared towards targeted training. There would have been no progress since Riga without research and support provided by the two agencies. From Cedefop, we need to see the continuation of its skills intelligence and forecast work to provide people and business with sufficiently detailed information. We often miss the granularity of information that would more easily transform words to action and deliverables. We need the ETF to step up the capacities of our neighbours, many of whom have a future in Europe. I hope you will keep helping us to put VET higher on the agenda and bring about the skills revolution. Like any revolution, it needs a purpose and a lot of commitment.



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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S SKILLS AGENDA SETS AMBITIOUS TARGETS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS:

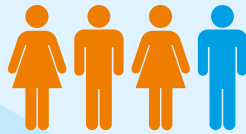
More than **4** out of **5**



VET graduates

should be employed after their studies

At least **3** out of **4**



VET learners

should benefit from practical work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships

An increase of **1/3** in the number of learners who benefit from a learning opportunity abroad

THE SKILLS AGENDA'S 12 ACTIONS



1. A pact for skills
2. Strengthening skills intelligence
3. EU support for strategic national upskilling action
4. Proposal for a Council recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience
5. Rolling out the European universities initiative and upskilling scientists
6. Skills to support the green and digital transitions
7. Increasing STEM graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills
8. Skills for life
9. Initiative on individual learning accounts
10. A European approach to micro-credentials
11. New Europass platform
12. Improving the enabling framework to unlock Member State and private investments in skills

MESSAGES FROM COMMISSIONER SCHMIT'S SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE

All the Commission's initiatives to support youth employment and upskilling policies are strongly anchored in the recovery and are essential to help the EU Member States, companies and individuals to get out of the present crisis, and to take advantage of the technological transformation.

To develop more, and especially more attractive, VET programmes, for both learners and companies, the new Council recommendation focuses on several subjects which are also in line with your conclusions from the Riga process.

First is making VET more resilient and digital. Apart from looking at how to train we also need to see what to train for. Skills intelligence, the gathering of information on the work and on the jobs of the future is a crucial element. Cedefop has already been working on this for a while and has important expertise. It is the information that VET providers can rely on to adapt the curricula to teach the skills needed for the green and digital transitions.

We have a strong focus on VET's attractiveness and excellence. One area of priorities is to embed VET better in research, higher education and technology sectors, so workers access more fulfilling positions. We are also increasing Erasmus programmes for VET learners.

The Council recommendation goes beyond supporting young people. It is also about encouraging adults to keep learning and give them the possibility to change careers as jobs transform, part of them disappear and are replaced by new ones. Public authorities, companies and social partners must offer people an adequate framework to develop new skills. This is what we will encourage.



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Towards age-neutral

VET systems



If we want people and businesses to seize new job opportunities and manage change, we need a stronger focus on continuing VET and on upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all

The Cedefop and ETF discussion paper on the challenges and opportunities for vocational education and training (VET) in the next decade (see pp. 10-11) was presented at the joint conference by Cedefop Deputy Director Mara Brugia and ETF's Head of Operations Anastasia Fetsi. They talked to *Skillset and match* about the paper's finer points.

The need for a stronger focus on continuing VET (CVET) is emphasised in the paper. Is the situation of CVET in Europe so unsatisfactory? Are we proposing to reduce policy effort on initial VET (IVET)?

MB: Our concern is that the implications of a fast-changing and uncertain labour market will affect especially those who have already left IVET and are out of formal education and training. If we want people and businesses to seize new job opportunities and manage change, we need a stronger focus on CVET and on upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all. We don't suggest that initial VET for

young people is becoming less important. Not at all. The focus on CVET is an acknowledgement of the important work done to reinforce our IVET systems over recent decades. But, despite progress in some countries, the existence of well-functioning CVET systems is the missing piece of integrated lifelong learning in many countries.

Recent Cedefop research suggests that almost half of European adults have low or outdated skills. This is an enormous challenge, which the coronavirus crisis has increased. The recent focus has also been on upskilling low-skilled adults, thanks to a forward-looking initiative from the European Commission. However, if the ambition is to ensure that CVET becomes the new standard path for all adults, we need a further shift in focus. A skills guarantee in which VET becomes the 'new normal' for all adults, supported by initiatives such as individual learning accounts, could – we believe – be the way to reach this goal.

CVET cares for learners with different needs: employees, self-employed, jobseekers, people looking for career development or a career change. How can we organise training to respond to such diversified demand?

AF: Diversified demand needs to be matched by diversified and flexible provision. Changes in the labour market and the workplace, and the need for adaptation of people to new realities, require individualised learning. This is something we have recognised for some years now and there is progress in this respect.

Today we have three main learning environments: the workplace, the training institution and the virtual space. Workplace learning is becoming increasingly prominent as it gives the opportunity to learn in authentic contexts, to become competent in resolving unforeseen problems and interacting with others. Then there is the training institution. We see a broad palette of training institutions established by different public or private actors, delivering

a great variety of programmes in terms of duration and design, addressing different kinds of learners and leading to different diplomas and certificates. We also see how the virtual space is becoming important through remote learning, using audiovisual material and interactive tools for learning and even self-help apps. The virtual space can offer more flexibility to adult learners to study at their own pace in their own time. These learning environments can, and often do, intermingle in a sequential or parallel manner. We must work towards blended solutions if we want to bring learning closer to individuals and to ensure the training they get is relevant.

Will systematic vocational learning opportunities for adults and expansion of work-based learning engage people and business in CVET?

MB: Cedefop evidence suggests that people and businesses are often not fully aware of training needs or available opportunities. The fast-changing world of work will inevitably increase people's demand for training. The Covid-19 crisis is a perfect example: overnight the need for developing or enhancing digital skills became real. The potential demand for online learning suddenly increased, as indicated by big data on Google searches. But there are many barriers to be overcome to translate this participation demand into training: financial and, in the case of companies, human resource constraints; the difficulty of balancing learning with work and family responsibilities; or the difficulty for individuals to identify the right learning opportunities. Continuing training policies need to go hand-in-hand with a package of support measures



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that include targeted outreach policies, well-coordinated guidance and validation, and flexible financial and non-financial support to learning. Social partners have a crucial role to play in this endeavour. It can also open a new area of activity for public employment services. And ensuring professional development and state-of-the-art tools for guidance practitioners, VET trainers and mentors is a prerequisite.

How does internationalisation impact VET systems?

AF: The way VET systems are organised is very different from country to country, depending on the way their labour markets function, the organisation of the overall education system and the sharing of responsibilities among private and public actors. But adaptation of VET systems cannot take place without considering global trends and challenges. Today, there are several international qualifications

issued by multinational enterprises or international sectoral organisations. Labour mobility is another issue calling for internationalisation of VET as systems prepare citizens for both local and international labour markets.

We have recently experienced strong impetus for change in VET systems everywhere. Today, more than ever, there is scope for cooperation and mutual learning, sharing of knowledge and practices and monitoring mechanisms that can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the different solutions proposed. ETF has closely followed the modernisation of VET systems in our partner countries; we can see how much national desire exists and how much benefit it brings in terms of inspiration. We also see an effort by international organisations jointly to promote cooperation and create platforms of exchange and knowledge-sharing. ■

Employment

vs

coronavirus:

challenge accepted

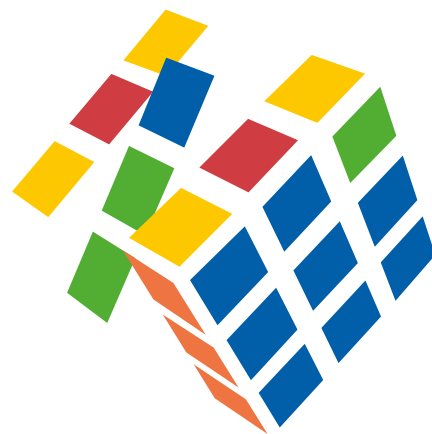
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It is not yet certain how extensive the impact of coronavirus on employment will be, but we can expect asymmetric effects

The future of work has been a concern for countries, organisations and individuals for decades. Finding the perfect equilibrium between skills supply and demand can be as difficult as it is for a common mind to resolve a Rubik's cube. Projections for the future of employment and the labour force can be made: which sectors and occupations will have the highest growth; how many job openings will be created; what skills level will be mostly in demand? And while a clear picture is emerging, a public health crisis beyond any expectation occurs. How does this change the expectations of the future of work?

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Estimations made in Cedefop's 2020 skills forecast deploy a pre-coronavirus baseline scenario for the future of skills and employment in the EU until 2030: how the world of skills would be if there was no crisis. The forecast is for more than 100 million total job openings up to 2030. Employment demand would move towards highly educated workers, with four out of five new jobs being for high-skilled occupations, which would accelerate job polarisation. Another notable trend is an expected fall in overall participation rates, as Europe's workforce is ageing. The question that arises, having already observed the first economic consequences of the pandemic, is whether the crisis will eventually alter these forecasts.



BABY BOOMERS RETIRING

The composition of Europe's workforce is expected to change much in the next decade. The 'Old Continent' is eventually getting old, as the proportion of the older population is increasing and many employees are close to retirement. This is partly a consequence of baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) being expected to retire by 2030. The latest skills forecast predicts that 90% of total job openings will be to replace existing workers, with increased expected retirement resulting in a fall in labour force participation. The coronavirus crisis is expected to intensify this, as workers who are close to retirement may decide to leave earlier to protect their health against the virus. This could be



supplemented by people who lost their jobs because of the pandemic, or who are nearing retirement, deciding to leave the labour force rather than search for a new job during the recovery period.

EMPLOYMENT AND AUTOMATION

Another norm for the future of employment is automation, as technology increasingly penetrates working life and risks leading to some occupations becoming obsolete. At the onset of the ‘second machine age’, the coronavirus is leading to faster adaptation to automation, with teleworking and new automated means of production and work now part of our lives. Some occupations at high or medium risk, both in terms of Covid-19 impact and automation, are metal machinery and related trades, workers in the manufacturing and the wholesale and retail sectors, as well as food preparation assistants in accommodation and catering, sectors greatly challenged by the pandemic’s consequences. It remains to be seen whether the crisis and its effects on the labour market will further increase this impact.

However, there are some jobs where human presence cannot be substituted by any machine. The pandemic reminds us that if it wasn’t for the humanity, passion, and stamina of our doctors and healthcare workers, we would not have been able to fight the new enemy. According to the 2020 skills forecast, the health and social care sector will have the highest employment growth in the next decade,

with 1% growth per year, and the highest number of job openings. These numbers are expected to become even higher, as more investment is currently being made in the healthcare sector due to the pandemic.

CORONAVIRUS AND PRECARIOUS WORK

Another question is whether the current crisis will increase so-called precarious employment. Even though a universally accepted definition does not exist, looking at some employment trends across sectors makes an initial assessment possible. In particular, when we look at the numbers of those involuntarily employed in part-time contracts (those who could not find a full-time job), we see that concentration is highest in sectors also hit hard by the pandemic, such as arts, recreation and other service activities, accommodation and food services, and administrative and support service activities.

It is not yet certain how extensive the impact of coronavirus on employment will be, but we can expect asymmetric effects, with certain countries, sectors or worker groups being more vulnerable than others. However, long-term trends for the EU labour market are still expected to hold after this crisis is over. ■



Lifelong guidance inventory: a unique new resource



Country information includes lifelong guidance policies, practices and services, for beneficiaries and learners of all ages across education, training and employment

Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices is unique in Europe. It is a repository of national records that provide structured information on current policy developments and services relating to career guidance, education and development in the countries of the EU, EEA, EFTA and EU enlargement. The inventory was launched in February 2020; as of July, there were 27 records and three more are expected this year.

Country information includes lifelong guidance policies, practices and services, for beneficiaries and learners of all ages across education, training and employment.

The new resource aims to monitor policy developments towards achieving the objectives established in the Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008) and the European guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance (ELGPN, 2015).

Reflecting aspects of these key policy objectives, each record section is based on information gathered, analysed and drafted by dedicated members of CareersNet, Cedefop's network of voluntary independent experts in career guidance and development.

Most recently, 20 experts provided inventory updates to document the impact of coronavirus on the provision and delivery of guidance services across sectors in their countries.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

The testimonies of the CareersNet steering group members, who oversaw the development of the inventory from its inception and contributed high-quality records, emphasise the resource's value and as a network activity:

Lifelong guidance policy development varies across EU Member States because of differences in societal, economic and political contexts. In designing lifelong guidance systems there is no single or optimal solution that fits all countries. Policy-makers need to make choices, considering their national context or local conditions and available financial resources. The inventory provides policy-makers with a set of structured common reference points for mutual policy learning. With the inventory's different sections, it is possible to examine how chosen policies compare with elements of good policies and practices from other countries.

Raimo Vuorinen

Project manager, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

CareersNet activities help raise awareness and enhance cooperation among different actors in the German career guidance system. Writing the report involved various guidance providers and stakeholders. As a result, the CareersNet country reports have been met with interest, including in ministries of education and labour. The National Guidance Forum has published a link to the CareersNet website. I am convinced that the priority topics chosen for 2020 (impact of Covid-19 on career guidance and implications of digitalisation for professional guidance delivery) are not only of interest for Germany, but for the whole of Europe and beyond.

Susanne Kratz

Public Employment Service (Germany)



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The inventory is a valuable source of updated, valid, reliable and impartial information on national career guidance policies, practices and trends in Europe; it is a transnational reference tool that was missing. It enables the identification of relevant transferable good practices as well as critical gaps among European countries, supporting policy dialogue and systemic interventions at national and European levels.

Fotini Vlachaki

Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare,
independent lifelong guidance expert (Greece)

The inventory provides information on European guidance policy and practice which can inform national guidance policy and planning. CareersNet currently serves as the focal point for collaboration on guidance across the EU. With national experts from all guidance sectors contributing, cohesive and constructive conversations are possible, to share information on current practices and consider future issues.

Jennifer McKenzie

Director, National Centre for Guidance in Education
(Ireland)

The testimonies of those outside of CareersNet, but working in career guidance and counselling in Greece, also indicate the many ways the inventory can be used:

I consider that the inventory offers valid and reliable information on the structure and function of career guidance services in European countries. It presents new developments and policy trends. I believe it will be useful for practitioners of career counselling, researchers and policy-makers. It aids comparative studies, favours the expansion of good practices and helps the convergence in application of guidance in Europe.

Michael Kassotakis

Emeritus Professor of Career Counselling and
Guidance, National and Kapodistrian University of
Athens

The inventory is another important contribution from Cedefop, which has been active in lifelong guidance for two decades. It is a useful tool for my work as an academic in this field: current information for my courses, student assignment material, data and ideas for comparative publications. Guidance practitioners and their colleagues across Europe can derive inspiration to network and collaborate, broadening their knowledge on other systems.

Ioanna Papavassiliou

Associate Professor of Lifelong Guidance and
Counselling, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki ■

Cedefop inventory
of lifelong guidance
systems and practices

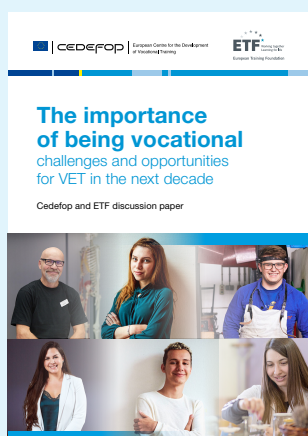


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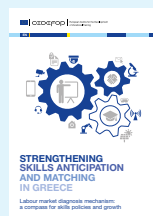
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IN FOCUS

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VOCATIONAL: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VET IN THE NEXT DECADE

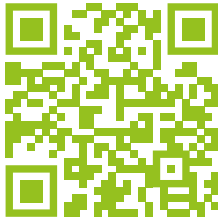
This discussion paper, jointly prepared by Cedefop and the ETF, aims to inform the next steps in vocational education and training (VET) policy-making at EU level, including the Osnabrück declaration expected to be discussed by ministers in the autumn of 2020. It puts forward key challenges and opportunities for VET. It draws on the intelligence, research and evidence collected over the years by the two agencies, each within its own remit and geographic scope.



OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

- Enhancing European cooperation in VET: the outcomes of the Riga cycle (published jointly with ETF)
- Vocational education and training in Europe, 1995-2035
- Briefing note – On the move but not there yet
- Briefing note – Apprenticeships for adults
- Spotlight on VET – Germany
- Strengthening skills anticipation and matching in Greece
- Strengthening skills anticipation and matching in Estonia
- Vocational education and training in Croatia – Short description
- European qualifications framework – IVET: focus on qualifications levels 3 and 4

coming up



For the latest information on what's coming up, go to www.cedefop.europa.eu/events or scan this QR code

IN FOCUS

THIRD POLICY LEARNING FORUM ON UPSKILLING PATHWAYS: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



5-6 NOVEMBER

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Cedefop and the European Economic and Social Committee are organising the 2020 policy learning forum on upskilling pathways. This is the third in a series of events providing a platform for countries to learn from one another and explore common challenges in tackling low skill levels in adults. Upskilling pathways is about pulling together resources for supporting every low-skilled adult along an individual path to empowerment. It is about creating a comprehensive approach to upskilling and reskilling the population. The Cedefop analytical framework, presented and discussed at the second policy learning forum, has been developed to sustain this unique vision. The aim of the third forum is to progress with support to implementation of upskilling pathways and to translate the analytical framework into practice.

OTHER EVENTS

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------|---|
| SEPTEMBER | 17-18 | VIRTUAL EVENT | Third Cedefop policy learning forum on apprenticeships |
| OCTOBER | 8-9 | VIRTUAL EVENT | Cedefop CareersNet's fourth annual meeting |
| OCTOBER | 13 | VIRTUAL EVENT | Launch of the Cedefop/Eurofound European Company Survey 2019 report. The fourth iteration of the survey was carried out jointly by Eurofound and Cedefop, strengthening the aspects related to skills strategies, utilisation and learning. |
| NOVEMBER | 9-13 | BERLIN, GERMANY | European vocational skills week 2020 will take place in Berlin, across Europe and beyond |
| DECEMBER | 3 and 7 | WEBINARS | Making excellence inclusive: towards a new Cedefop survey of VET teachers and trainers |



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