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Main story



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Getting a job: work-based learning makes a difference

Young people with vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, which include a significant amount of work-based learning, have higher employment rates compared to those who come from general education or from fully or mainly school-based VET, Cedefop Director James Calleja told the European Commission's monitoring conference in Brussels (11-12 February).

In his keynote speech, Mr Calleja said that, according to Cedefop research, 'employers place a premium on work experience, and in countries where VET is well developed, includes work-based learning and is governed together with social partners, it results in better labour-market outcomes for VET graduates.'

Apprenticeship is a popular form of work-based learning, especially in several European countries. It provides alternate learning in a VET school/institution and in an enterprise. The European alliance for apprenticeships, which was launched in 2013, aims to bring together public authorities, businesses, social partners, VET providers, youth representatives and other key actors to promote apprenticeship schemes and initiatives across Europe.

'The revival of apprenticeships can only work if learners and enterprises buy in – and this is a challenge, in particular in countries with high youth unemployment rates or a small share of VET,' noted Mr Calleja.

He emphasised that 'while even the most labour-market relevant education and training cannot create sufficient jobs, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning can provide high-quality training and help match learning outcomes to the skills employers require.'

The Cedefop Director said that the Davos World Economic Forum had also 'underlined the value of these schemes to promote transition to the labour market and activation of young people out of work.'

What makes apprenticeship attractive, according to Mr Calleja, is that it provides the skills that companies need, acts as a stepping stone to the labour market, offers learners a formally recognised qualification, which entitles them to exercise an occupation, and gives them access to further education and training.

'Several EU Member States have shaped policies to make VET more attractive and have worked on common criteria to assure it is of high quality,' he added.

However, Mr Calleja stressed, just one in four enterprises with 10 or more employees trains apprentices. So, 'if we want to give more young people a chance to get an apprenticeship, we have to encourage more enterprises in more countries to train, and also in other sectors and occupations than those in craft-type professions traditionally taking on apprentices, such as in ICT, sales, healthcare or renewable energies.'


While the pressure to tackle youth unemployment has moved work-based learning high up on the European policy agenda, Mr Calleja warned that 'it is a risk if we expect too much in virtually no time; what we need is policy learning from good and bad experience, to understand what works and what doesn't.'

He concluded that we also 'need to work closer with VET institutions in Member States to support cooperation between VET schools and enterprises, the use of the European tools for transparency, recognition and mobility, and to build a culture of "learning by doing" at all levels of the qualifications frameworks based on good governance, quality assurance and sustainable partnerships'.

Note to editors

The Cedefop report *From education to working life – the labour market outcomes of vocational education and training* (2012) can be found at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/20448.aspx>

Attachments

 [EN European monitoring conference programme](#) (PDF 117.15 Kb 14/02/2014)

 [EN Press release](#) (PDF 42.95 Kb 12/02/2014)

News from Cedefop



Cedefop/OECD Green skills forum: greening trends will eventually create new jobs

Experts from international organisations including ILO, Unesco, Unitar, the World Bank and universities, as well as country delegates, met at the 2nd Cedefop/OECD Green skills forum in Paris, on 14 February, to discuss how environmental policies can successfully be implemented in combination with policies for job creation and social inclusion.

The forum was opened by OECD Deputy Secretary-General Rintaro Tamaki. He underlined that 'we need to share experience and cooperate in the creation of knowledge as we move from a high-carbon to a low-carbon society.'

Cedefop Deputy Director Christian Lettmayr stressed the pivotal role of the European Union (EU) in sustainable development. 'The EU has committed itself to ambitious targets and should become a role model for emerging countries,' he said.

Mr Lettmayr pointed out that the combination of greener jobs and more jobs is also about better-quality jobs: 'Even though a lot of progress, technically and politically, has been made, environmental policies are still driven by policy and regulation rather than market demand. We have not yet reached the tipping point from which on green will be the new mainstream. Only then will we see substantial creation of new greener jobs, and possession of green skills will be a requirement in many professions and honoured by employers.'

Despite slow progress so far, experts remain confident that greening trends will eventually create new jobs as the ad hoc poll organised by Robert Strauss, European Commission DG Employment, at the skills forum confirmed.

Links

- [2nd Green skills forum website](#)



A model of governance 'to support European tools and employability' – Cedefop Director

At a European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE) conference, at Wembley Stadium in London, Cedefop Director James Calleja proposed a joint activity on vocational education and training (VET) and mobility of the sport and active leisure sector and the international financial services sector based on a common model of governance to support the use of European tools and policies related to VET, skills and qualifications.

In his testimonial, Mr Calleja spoke about the 7-step model, which was finalised by EOSE in 2011. The seven steps to achieve quality in VET-related qualifications are: labour market intelligence, an occupational map, occupational descriptors, a functional map, a competence framework/occupational standards, a guide to qualifications and learning outcomes, and quality assurance processes.

The conference, on 24 and 25 February, was organised by EOSE's VSPORT+ project, which is funded by the European Commission under the lifelong learning programme 2007-13.

Some 64 participants from 20 countries, including Olympic Games medallist Claudia Bokel and senior officials from

SkillsActive Australia and SkillsActive Aotearoa New Zealand, had the opportunity to present latest activities and EU policy developments, some concrete national case studies, and to exchange views on the main education and training challenges the sector is currently facing as well as concrete opportunities and suggestions for the development of its workforce.

The Cedefop Director focused on the importance of standards in VET-related qualifications, which should fundamentally govern a sector in which qualifications are led by the governing bodies themselves; on mobility, which allows those working in the sectors to move from one region/country to another with recognised knowledge, skills and competences; on transparency as a tool which is today strengthened by the European processes the model uses, such as the EQF, ECVET, quality assurance standards in vocational training, Europass and others; and on employment, which the model aims to achieve.

'At the end of the day, people need employment, recognition for their work and quality of life within well-defined structures and processes. In this context, the 7-step model is a valid tool, particularly in providing this sector with a European context, which may be easily exported to other regions of the world but also to other sectors, such as the financial sector which is also currently working on a similar model,' added Mr Calleja.

He also stressed 'the sectoral and global appeal of the model in the context of the economic crisis and youth unemployment' and 'how the sector can support people in becoming more employable.'



Skill mismatch: an issue of worldwide concern according to the World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum has just published a paper on the issue of skill mismatch, to which Cedefop contributed substantially.

The economic crisis has caused a worrying increase in unemployment and underemployment in many advanced, emerging and developing countries. Yet, many employers still report difficulties in finding the required talent.

Employers tend to attribute these perceived shortages to skill deficits among job applicants. However, they are often explained by other factors, such as geographical mismatch between skill supply and demand, poor working conditions and inefficient or stringent human-resource practices.

Skill mismatch, whatever its cause, represents a significant loss of investment in people and has important economic and well-being costs for enterprises and individuals. Consequently, closer scrutiny of all of the problems of matching skills to labour market needs has started.

The paper *Matching skills and labour market needs: building social partnerships for better skills and better jobs* can be found at:

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_Employment_MatchingSkillsLabourMarket_Report_2014.pdf

Other reports from the World Economic Forum can be found at: <http://www.weforum.org/reports>



Greek EU Presidency explores role of apprenticeship in achieving youth guarantee aim

In 2014, Cedefop will support cooperation at European level and among Member States to foster the development of apprenticeship-type work-based learning, Cedefop senior expert Loukas Zahilas told a Greek EU Presidency event in Athens.

The one-day event on 14 February gathered European and local experts to discuss 'the institution of apprenticeship as a means of achieving the EU youth guarantee aim: the role and cooperation framework of all the stakeholders involved.'

In his opening speech, Greek Education Minister Constantinos Arvanitopoulos said that his government's aim is to 'make vocational education and training first choice and not just an afterthought as it has been up to now.' He added that in Greece 'only 7% of new entrants in the labour market have made the transition from an apprenticeship to a job. Our aim is for that proportion to be closer to 30% in 2020.'

Mr Zahilas stressed that work-based learning makes a difference in getting a job. He added that Cedefop is working to help develop the system on a European level through the European alliance for apprenticeships and the implementation of the youth guarantee schemes, the technical working group on vocational education and training (VET), help with the establishment of bilateral apprenticeship alliances, analysis of systems of governance and financing of apprenticeship in Europe and a workshop on work-based learning in continuing VET.

When it comes to supporting Greece, Mr Zahilas said that Cedefop is involved in the Hellenic qualifications framework (HQF) development, participates in conferences, workshops and events, is about to publish a short

description of the Greek VET system, acts as a source of labour market intelligence and works with the Municipality of its host city, Thessaloniki, on a VET-related project.



Skills and employability: opportunities for youth in the Greek labour market

Despite public concerns regarding the diminishing value of educational qualifications, acquiring higher qualifications and skills is still the best bet for getting a job, experts said at an event on labour market opportunities for youth, in Thessaloniki.

The event, organised jointly by Cedefop, the City of Thessaloniki and the Regional Directorate for Education and supported by Europe Direct (Municipality), involved social partners and other labour market actors in drawing conclusions for future action. It was part of the European Youth Capital's thematic focus on vocational education and training.

Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris thanked Cedefop for its cooperation, 'which reinforces the targeted efforts of the municipality to address the problem of youth unemployment.'

He added: 'We want to be have the role of a catalyst but also to be assertive so that the local vocational education and training system can overcome its established structural weaknesses either by becoming a pilot for the rest of the country or by enforcing the necessary changes on a national level.'

Cedefop Director James Calleja mentioned the longstanding relationship of the agency with the city, which he said he is determined to continue and enhance. He stressed that 'one of the main reasons why Mediterranean countries are faced with the economic crisis is because we do not exploit enough the human potential we have.'

Mr Calleja concluded: 'We have been talking about bringing the world of work and education together for years. Now is the time for action. I can understand the frustration of people who wake up in the morning and do not know what to do. This is the challenge. This is where the politicians have to work hard to attract investment, create the infrastructures so that people wake up and go to work.'

Cedefop experts Konstantinos Pouliakas, Irene Psifidou and Pedro Moreno da Fonseca made a presentation on the right skills for the right jobs. They highlighted that:

- Over time, and also during the years of the economic crisis (2008-2012), individuals with higher qualifications were less likely to experience unemployment.
- Even though individuals with tertiary education degrees were more likely to be employed during the years of the economic crisis, the limited job creation and the greater competition for jobs has resulted in a greater share of over-qualified workers mainly in Southern Europe.
- Despite claims of endemic skill deficits in Europe, the share of young individuals that are studying has increased since 2008. Both in the EU and (even more in) Greece, we have the most qualified young generation in our history.
- Because of the greater supply of individuals with higher qualifications in the labour market, employers are increasingly relying on the possession of generic skills (e.g. team-working, problem-solving, interpersonal skills) by young job applicants as a filter for recruitment.
- Young Greeks are investing more heavily in the education and training process compared to their European peers. However, graduates in Greece are less likely to have accumulated work experience during their studies.
- About 30% of young individuals (aged 18-24) in Greece are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs), which is considerably higher than the 17% average of NEETs in the EU28.

In the discussion that followed, it was stressed that there are no easy solutions but analysing the problem will offer better prospects, while some experts argued that in Greece today there is no skills shortage but rather a lack of jobs.



Cedefop's lifelong learning work and Europass discussed at workshop

Cedefop's priorities and objectives and the Europass platform were presented at a workshop organised by Greece's state scholarship foundation (IKY) and the national agency for the Erasmus+ programme, on 19 February.

The workshop aimed at motivating several agencies and organisations to participate and implement Erasmus+ activities.

Senior expert Corinna Frey emphasised the added value that Cedefop brings to Thessaloniki, its host city. She explained to the 900 participants how the agency's work, which feeds into the European policy process, eventually interlinks with the orientations of the European lifelong learning programme, in particular Erasmus+.

Senior expert Philippe Tissot and trainee Eftychia Koletsou moderated a workshop with a detailed presentation of the Europass platform, which helps European citizens communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training.

Participants included students, teachers and labour market representatives.



New publication: On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies

European policy-making in vocational education and training (VET) needs to be supported by sound quantitative information. Cedefop has selected a set of 32 statistical indicators to quantify key aspects of VET and lifelong learning, based on their policy relevance and importance for achieving the Europe 2020 objectives.

The aim is to help describe, monitor and compare countries. This update incorporates new hard evidence from the European statistical system.

The indicators do not claim to assess national systems or policies but should be used as headline figures for reflecting on progress towards the strategic objectives set for Europe.

Taking 2010 as the baseline year, the indicators present statistical overviews for the 28 European Union Member States and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)
-



Cedefop work programme 2014: new projects and challenges

Cedefop's work programme 2014 takes the final phase of the medium-term priorities 2012-14 into account in a European context of low economic recovery, high youth unemployment, skills needs and gaps and the overall European policy framework for education and training.

New projects include the EU skills panorama (EUSP) and the inventory on validation. Following up a mandate from the European Council, national qualifications frameworks (NQF) mapping's scope will be broadened to include progress on validation systems in 33 countries; and the Centre will support the European alliance for apprenticeships.

In 2014, Cedefop will continue to respond to increasing needs for country-specific information. One major deliverable will be the policy report, which will reflect progress in the Copenhagen process and provide evidence for revision of the objectives as formulated in the Bruges communiqué.

The Centre will closely cooperate with the European institutions and respond to needs of Member States and social partners. In cooperation with other agencies, the European Training Foundation and Eurofound, as well as OECD, Unesco and other supranational organisations, Cedefop will provide evidence on emerging skills needs and the consequences this has for provision of vocational education and training.

Cedefop's work programme 2014 constitutes an ambitious attempt to preserve its core activities, respond to new requests and ensure previous quality standards while respecting resource constraints.

Links

- [Work programme 2014](#)
-



New publication: Spotlight on VET United Kingdom

Vocational education and training (VET) is offered at most levels of the qualifications frameworks in the United Kingdom.

A separate qualifications and credit framework exists in England and Northern Ireland from the ones in Scotland

and Wales.

There are around 200 awarding organisations in the UK and several thousand accredited qualifications.

Read more in the six-page guide to the VET system of the UK.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)
-



New publication: Spotlight on VET Slovenia

Formal vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Slovenia are generally provided by public schools, which together with private providers also offer continuing VET for adults.

In addition to VET programmes, the national vocational qualifications system has been in place since 2000.

This concise guide offers an overview of Slovenia's VET system in six pages.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)
-



New publication: Spotlight on VET Poland

Management and administration of the VET system in Poland has a three-level structure: national, partially regional and district.

Social partners are involved in developing the VET system by giving opinions on planned changes to VET.

At upper secondary level, students can gain vocational qualifications at a three-year basic vocational school or at a four-year upper secondary technical school.

Polish VET at technical schools and post-secondary schools is mainly school-based with a share of 50% practical training in VET programmes, while in basic vocational schools the practice and theory proportion is 60% and 40% respectively.

Read more in this six-page guide to Poland's VET system.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)
-



New publication: Spotlight on VET Hungary

Recent legislation in Hungary has led to more centralised vocational education and training (VET) governance.

Central administration of VET is led by the Minister for the National Economy. Since the 1990s, business and industry have been involved in national advisory bodies and, increasingly, in decision-making on VET-related issues.

At age 14, learners decide if they wish to enter VET and what type. Around two thirds choose VET.

For more on VET in Hungary, download the six-page guide.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)
-



New publication: Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013

Eleven years after the first meeting on the creation of a credit transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET), how committed are countries to applying VET credit transfer to their wider qualifications systems? Using information provided by social partners, national and regional authorities and credit transfer system experts, this fourth annual report on ECVET looks into how far 38 countries/regions have come in testing, using, and committing to applying ECVET in qualifications; and examines which countries have put this development on hold, and why.

Links

- [Download the publication](#)

EU Policy



Conclusions on Efficient and Innovative Education and Training to Invest in Skills

The Council adopted conclusions on innovative education and training to invest in skills, in the context of the European Semester and in particular the education aspects of the 2014 Annual Growth Survey.

The conclusions call for action to improve skills performance across the EU and to help protect investment in education and training as areas which can both foster and support growth.

Links

- [Conclusions on Efficient and Innovative Education](#)
-

Public consultation on a European area of skills and qualifications

The objective of the consultation is to collect the views of stakeholders on the problems faced by learners and workers with regard to the transparency and recognition of their skills and qualifications when moving within and between EU Member States, on the adequacy of the related European policies and instruments and on the potential benefits of developing a 'European area of skills and qualifications'.

The consultation addresses in particular the following issues:

1. How to place a stronger focus on higher and more relevant skills?
2. Further strengthening links between education/training, mobility and the labour market
3. Adapting to internationalisation trends
4. Ensuring overall coherence of tools and policies and further implementing the learning outcomes approach
5. Ensuring clarity of rules and procedures for the recognition of skills and qualifications for further learning
6. Increasing the focus on quality assurance
7. Providing learners and workers with a single access point to obtain information and services supporting a European area of skills and qualifications

The consultation will remain open until 15 April 2014.

Links

- [Public consultation](#)
-



External Evaluation of Cedefop

The External Evaluation of Cedefop was conducted in compliance with Article 27 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities specifying that evaluations should be applied to all programmes and activities which entail significant spending and evaluation results should be disseminated to spending, legislative and budgetary authorities.

The evaluation follows the previous such effort provided in 2007 and covers the period until mid-2012.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information on whether Cedefop's activities are well chosen to provide support to the European VET policy agenda and take into account European-level policy, as well as to point out possibilities for further development of Cedefop's role as a resource for European VET policy.

Furthermore, the evaluation reflected on possible synergies between Cedefop and other EU decentralised agencies, with a view to enhancing cooperation among them for better results and a more efficient use of resources.

[extract]

Links

- [External evaluation](#)
-



Social Agenda - Youth Employment

The latest issue of Social Agenda highlights the need for a new approach to employment, social and inclusion policy to promote youth employment: a combination of urgent, highly targeted measures supporting young people directly and of longer term structural reforms.

Links

- [Social Agenda n. 35](#)

Agenda

Validation Seminar on Methodological Guides for Skills Anticipation and Matching - Cedefop-ILO-ETF expert seminar

■ Dates: 06/03/2014 - 07/03/2014 ■ Venue: Prague ■ Country: Czech Republic ■ Cedefop involvement: Co-Organiser

Cedefop, in cooperation with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is organising an expert seminar on Skills anticipation guides.

The purpose of the event is to present and validate the final drafts of 3 guides of the compendium of methodological guides which the ETF, Cedefop and the ILO have been developing for skills anticipation and matching (i.e. Guide on Tracer Studies, Guide on the use of labour market information (LMI) and Guide on Employers Skills Surveys). The objective of the seminar is to ensure their validity and usefulness for target audiences and provide expert feedback and advice to the authors of the guides with a view to finalising them.

Please find enclosed the event's agenda.

If you wish to participate, please contact roula.panagiotou@cedefop.europa.eu. It is up to each participant to bear own travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

Attachments

 [EN Prague seminar - agenda](#) (PDF 203.17 Kb 20/02/2014)

Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

■ Dates:10/03/2014 - 11/03/2014 ■ Venue: Brussels ■ Country: Belgium ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council is composed of employment, social protection, consumer protection, health and equal opportunities ministers, who meet around four times a year.

Links

- [Link to the event](#)
-

European Youth Conference

■ Dates:10/03/2014 - 12/03/2014 ■ Venue: Thessaloniki ■ Country: Greece ■ Cedefop involvement: Not applicable

The Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, with the support of the European Commission, hosts the EU Youth Conference on the topic of Social Inclusion of Young People.

The EU Youth Conference is one of the milestones of the structured dialogue process, which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field. The EU Youth Conference builds upon the results of national consultations conducted in the 28 Member States of the European Union as well as the reports submitted by International Non-Governmental Youth Organizations (INGYOs).

The conference will be hosted in the city of Thessaloniki, the European Youth Capital for 2014, and will bring together around 250 participants from National Youth Councils (NYCs) and Directorates-General for Youth from the EU, candidate countries and EFTA (European Free Trade Alliance) states, as well as from International Non-Governmental Youth Organizations (INGYOs), the European Youth Forum and the European Commission.

Links

- [European Youth Conference](#)
-

Meeting of General Directors for Vocational Training

■ Dates:27/03/2014 - 28/03/2014 ■ Venue: Athens ■ Country: Greece ■ Cedefop involvement: Participant

Meeting of General Directors for Vocational Training

Links

- [Link to DGVT Meeting](#)
-

International conference: The promise of validation of prior learning as the motor for social and economic change

■ Dates:09/04/2014 - 11/04/2014 ■ Venue: Rotterdam, The Netherlands ■ Country: Europe ■ Cedefop involvement: Participant

A biennial event to decide on validation strategy... worldwide.

Cedefop will participate with two keynote speakers:

Ernesto Villalba will present the 2014 update of the European inventory of validation of non-formal and informal learning and

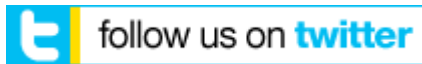
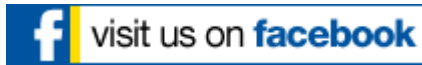
discuss preliminary outcomes.

Jens Bjornavold will speak on 'Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe: the challenging move from policy to practice'.

Links

- [Link of the event](#)

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News from the Member States



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