



Cedefop achievements 2009 and plans 2010

Strengthening European cooperation in vocational education and training policy

The financial crisis has had a major effect on European Union (EU) economies in 2009 and will continue to do so in 2010. As the decade of the Lisbon strategy comes to a close, the European Commission has launched a consultation on the future EU 2020 strategy.

The EU 2020 strategy aims to support knowledge-based growth, to empower people in inclusive societies and develop a competitive, connected and greener economy. As with Lisbon, improving knowledge, skills and competences is central to the proposed 2020 strategy. It remains central because, although much has changed in the last 10 years, Europe is not yet where it wants to be. Upskilling and broadening knowledge, skills and competences to fill tomorrow's jobs is one Europe's greatest challenges.

and training in Member States. Cedefop has been closely involved with developments in vocational education and training (VET) and skills analyses over the years. In 2010, its work will help bridge the transition to the new strategy.

Skills and competences for new jobs

In 2008, the European Commission launched the new skills for new jobs initiative which emphasises the importance of anticipating Europe's skill needs better.

Cedefop has become the key source of information on **forecasting skill needs and supply**. Its demand forecast for 2020 shows that Europe is moving to more knowledge and skill intensive jobs and that the need for higher and a broader range of skills will increase. The decline in jobs for those with no or low qualifications will continue.

A word about Cedefop

Cedefop is the EU's agency to support European VET development. For 2009-11 Cedefop's strategic objective is to 'contribute to excellence in VET and strengthen European cooperation in developing, implementing and evaluating European VET policy'. Its strategic objective is supported by four priorities:

- informing European VET policies;
- interpreting European trends in and challenges for skills, competences and learning;
- assessing VET's benefits;
- raising the profile of VET.

Cedefop works to strengthen European cooperation in VET, by using its expertise in research, policy analysis and networking. It disseminates its information through its website, publications, study visits, conferences and seminars to decision-makers in European institutions, Member States and the social partners.

Policies to make education and training flexible, innovative and adaptable to citizens' and employment needs have been devised. European tools to encourage mobility and learning throughout life have been developed and partly implemented. But now they have to become mainstream features of education



Cedefop's supply forecast was presented at a very successful Agora conference, *Matching skills and jobs* in June 2009 (95 % rated the Agora as very good or good). It shows that young people and women are more highly qualified than ever. Many young people are staying on in education, in particular higher education. Despite high unemployment and due to imbalances between what is being learnt and labour market needs skill, mismatches continue to exist. To

meet demand, Europe's ageing workforce needs higher and broader skills to improve its job prospects and to cope with advances in new technology, new work processes and issues such as climate change.

In 2010, Cedefop will update its forecasts taking into account the possible effects of the economic crisis on long-term skill development. Debate on skills will continue for example through presentations to European Commissioners, the European Parliament and at a Spanish Presidency conference. Cedefop is also researching different types of skill mismatch, such as looking at how fast and why skills become obsolete for ageing workers and how mismatches can be prevented.

Analysing and reporting on policy developments

At Bruges, in December 2010, Cedefop, working closely with the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency, Member States and social partners, will present the next **European VET policy report**, the last one under the Lisbon strategy. It will be a thorough analysis of progress since 2002 and will provide a basis for decisions on European VET policy after 2010.



At the request of the European Commission, European Ministers for VET and social partners, Cedefop has reported on progress every two years since 2004. Cedefop's 2008 report, *Continuity, consolidation and change*, was debated in 2009. Ján Figel, then European Commissioner for education, training youth and culture, concluded that although European cooperation had stimulated VET reform, the EU would not meet most of its education and training targets for 2010. The work needs to continue.

Supporting development and implementation of common European tools

Common European tools, which touch on almost all aspects of VET reform, are evidence of the strength of European cooperation in VET. Collectively, they improve our understanding of qualifications and skills. They support transfer of and mobility for learning across borders and between general, vocational and higher education and the workplace within one country, making it easier to acquire new skills and qualifications throughout working life.

Comprehensive **national qualifications frameworks** (NQFs) have, over the last five years, become key instruments for the reform of education, training and qualifications systems in the EU. The **European qualifications framework** for lifelong learning (EQF), adopted by the European Parliament and Council in 2008, has acted as a catalyst for these developments. Cedefop's recent report – *The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe* – analyses the development and implementation of NQFs, and how they influence the EQF's implementation and their contribution to national developments and lifelong learning reforms. In 2009, a Recommendation established the **European credit system for VET** (ECVET), which enables credits for learning outcomes to be transferred from one qualifications system to another, or between general and vocational education. Also in 2009 a Recommendation introduced the **European quality assurance reference framework** (EQARF) to provide a basis of trust in other VET systems. Success of the EQF and ECVET depends on this trust being in place.

Cedefop made a substantial contribution to the concept, design and implementation of these European tools and to the Recommendations that established them. Each Recommendation sets out a timetable for implementation. In 2010, Cedefop will use its expertise to support their implementation, for example, by continuing to coordinate jointly, with the European Commission, the EQF advisory group.

Europass is another European tool Cedefop helped develop. Europass is a portfolio of five documents, available in 26 languages. It is closely linked to the EQF and supports a common understanding of qualifications. Work in 2010 will focus on improving and developing Europass documents and making them compatible with the EQF and ECVET. Use of Europass has increased significantly, demonstrating its value to learners,

workers and citizens across Europe. Since Europass' launch in 2005, more than 21 million people have visited the Europass website. There were more than seven million visits in 2009 alone. Some 2.5 million Europass CVs were completed on line in 2009, bringing the total to 6.7 million since 2005.

Qualifications for lifelong learning

To meet future skill needs education and training systems need to adapt. A big step has already been made by an agreement among Member States to use **learning outcomes**. Learning outcomes emphasise what someone can do at the end of any learning experience rather than the duration, content or location of learning. This is a major reform for many Member States and, supported by European tools (see above) which are also based on learning outcomes, it promises to make systems more open and flexible and supportive of lifelong learning.

In 2009, Cedefop's study of policies and practice on learning outcomes showed that major changes are underway. Several comparative studies by Cedefop have analysed how qualifications are awarded and used in Europe and how they support individuals' needs for lifelong learning, recognition and employability. In 2010, Cedefop will continue to provide new insights on the changing role of qualifications.

Linked to developments in learning outcomes, Cedefop is also examining **competence-based curriculum developments** in 32 countries, looking at the relationship between curricula and learning outcomes. Cedefop is also monitoring trends affecting **VET teachers and trainers** and studying **VET and higher education** and its links with the labour market.

Knowledge and competences acquired in work are just as much part of each individual's human capital as their learning in the formal education and training system. More open systems are needed to provide greater opportunity for learning in different settings. Cedefop is supporting the design and implementation of systems to **assess and validate competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning**, including their use by enterprises to recruit and manage human resources.

More broadly, Cedefop is analysing **adult learning** trends and policy developments to support the European Commission's action plan. An older working population that is changing jobs and careers more rapidly and looking to acquire new and broader skills through new learning opportunities need

guidance throughout their working lives to make informed choices. Cedefop is supporting implementation of Council resolutions from 2004 and 2008 on **lifelong guidance**.

To support policy developments, peer learning and exchanges of information continued through the **study visits programme**. Cedefop continued to coordinate study visits as part of the EU's lifelong learning programme. In the academic year 2008/09, there were 246 study visits with some 2 600 education and training specialists participating. Cedefop also encouraged social partners to participate in study visits and will continue to do so in 2010.

Assessing vocational education and training's benefits

Economic restructuring following the crisis will also require VET to adapt to new needs. Cedefop's research complements its policy support role by seeking out issues and trends and filling knowledge gaps. In 2010, Cedefop will disseminate the results of ***Modernising vocational education and training: Cedefop's fourth report on VET research*** to encourage debate on European VET policy. Evidence in the report shows that VET has been responding to socio-economic challenges. VET is a driver of success and competitiveness for European economies and societies. VET plays a role in sustaining economic development, promoting active ageing, ensuring adequate skill supply, supporting enterprises' innovation capacity, growth and productivity, combating social exclusion and improving social cohesion. Synchronised and modern VET is not only an aim but also a means of addressing the challenges that lie ahead.

Cedefop has launched a new medium-term research programme on the **economic and social benefits of VET**. A clearer understanding of VET's contribution to job prospects, productivity, competitiveness and social inclusion can inform investment decisions about VET. Starting in 2010, Cedefop will release online the first results. This will be particularly valuable in future debates and decisions about priorities for public expenditure.

Council Conclusions in 2008 stressed the importance of investing in people. A survey of Member States carried out in 2009 by the Swedish Presidency, supported by Cedefop and the European Commission, showed that, in response to the economic crisis, there appears to be a consensus among governments and social partners to try to keep people in work. Many

Member States are providing public money, also supported by the European Social Fund, to enable firms to combine short-term work with training. Cedefop has built up considerable expertise in **VET financing** and in 2010, it will continue to analyse trends and use of funding instruments and identify best practices to inform policy making.

Cedefop's role in on-going international work to **improve VET statistics**, endorsed by the Bordeaux communiqué and Council conclusions in 2008, will continue in 2010, in particular contribute to develop an employability benchmark and VET indicators.

Cedefop meeting information needs

Cedefop will continue to raise the profile of VET. In 2010, key messages will be on skill needs, implementation of the European qualifications framework, adult learning and the latest developments in European VET policy. Available in several languages, Cedefop's briefing notes will keep policy makers informed of developments in VET.

In 2009, Cedefop's expertise was widely used at meetings of senior policy-makers and Czech and Swedish Presidency conferences. Cedefop made presentations to hearings of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and provided background information to support their debates and opinions on VET. Cedefop's work was cited in major European policy documents.

In 2009, Cedefop's **new web portal** (www.cedefop.europa.eu) went live presenting information linked to particular VET themes more clearly. Cedefop's files were downloaded more than 350 000 times.

Cedefop continues to make every effort to follow good administrative practice. Cedefop uses activity-based budgeting and has implemented a comprehensive performance measurement system (see box) to assess impact, strengthen planning and reporting and to ensure that its activities, priorities and objectives are all aligned.

Focusing on the long-term

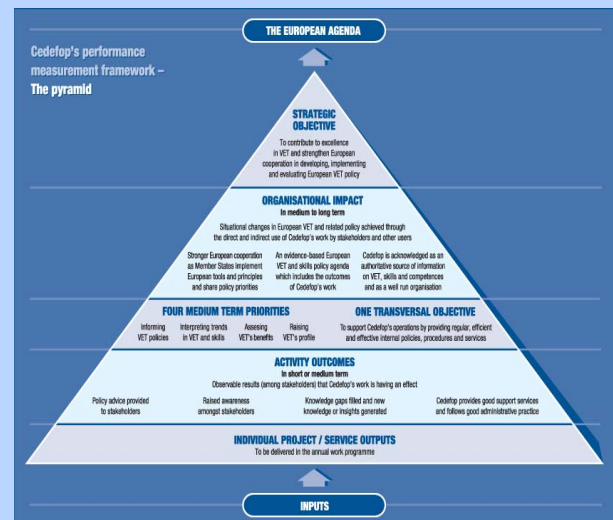
Cedefop's advice and expertise helps develop policies for knowledge, skills and competences for economic recovery and growth. The European Commission, Member States and social partners have entrusted Cedefop with some key tasks, which it will carry out to the best of its ability. A major policy challenge in 2010 will be to remedy and mitigate high youth and

structural unemployment while keeping the focus on the long term VET reform. In both cases, Cedefop will work to provide evidence and support.

Cedefop's performance measurement system

Cedefop has developed a performance measurement system (PMS) for its medium-term priorities 2009-11 and its annual work programmes. It helps Cedefop to manage and evaluate its impact, efficiency, effectiveness and relevance and aligns its activities with its strategic objective and priorities.

The PMS uses three types of results – output, outcome and impact –, in line with Cedefop's medium-term priorities 2009-11 and strategic objective. Outputs of Cedefop's projects (studies, publications, conferences and attendance at meetings such as working groups) combine to produce outcomes. Cedefop's outcomes are filling knowledge gaps and generating new insights on VET issues to provide policy advice to and raise awareness among Cedefop's stakeholders. Cedefop's outputs are monitored by the annual management plan. Outcomes are measured using 16 proxy indicators. The PMS framework is illustrated below in the form of a pyramid.



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