

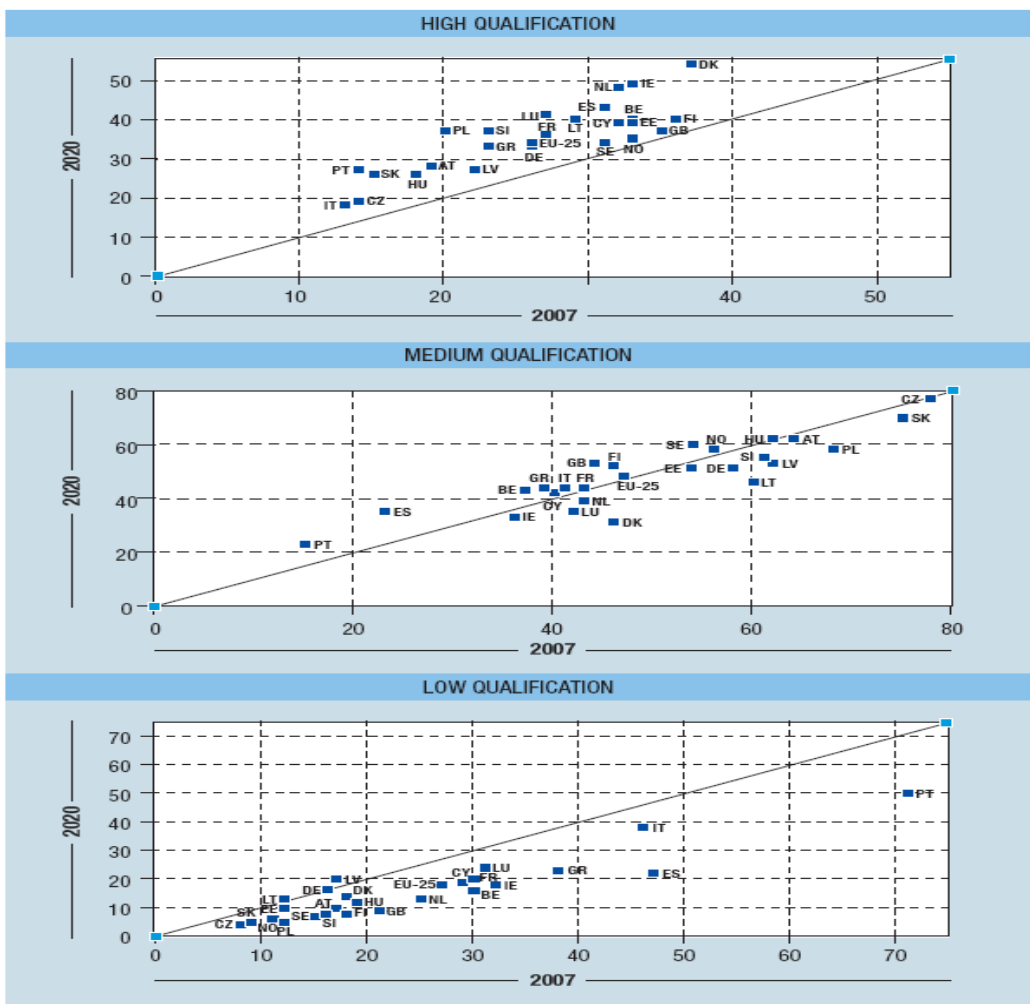


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
9 JUNE 2009

## Qualifications are rising in Europe, but inequalities persist

The level of qualifications and skills is rising across Europe, particularly among younger people – and even more so among women. But inequalities in the level of education persist among Member States. These are some of the conclusions of the first pan-European forecast of its kind, *Future skill supply in Europe: medium-term forecast up to 2020*, published today by Cedefop.

The forecast shows a declining number of people with low qualifications in almost all EU countries and a steady rise in medium (mostly vocational) and high qualifications, both among the labour force and among the general population.



Changing qualification structure of the labour force aged 25 and over at national level, shares in %, EU-25 without Malta, plus Norway

Source: Cedefop, 2009.

The skills supply forecast complements Cedefop's forecast of the medium-term demand for skills, published in 2008. Providing cumulative data for all Member States except Romania, Bulgaria and Malta (and with the addition of Norway), the forecast also gives results for each country separately.

The next phase of the Cedefop's skill needs project will be to bring together the separate forecasts for demand and supply and identify mismatches between available and in-demand skills. The merged macroeconomic forecasts will be updated every two years, allowing policy-makers in the EU and in the Member States to take these projections into account when formulating education and employment policy.

The results of the skills supply forecast will be debated at a Cedefop conference, **Matching skills and jobs: anticipating skill needs in challenging times**, held at its premises in Thessaloniki, Greece on 11-12 June.

### Key points

- A substantial rise in the number of adults in the labour force with a high level of education (ISCED 5 and 6) is predicted: more than 20 million for the EU-25, equivalent to a 40% increase between 2007 and 2020. The highest increases are expected in Portugal and Poland, with average annual growth for the period of over 5%. However, Denmark is expected to have the highest proportion of highly qualified people relative to the rest of the labour force (see chart).
- The supply of adults with medium level qualifications (ISCED 3 and 4) that are available to work is also expected to rise over the period. In Europe, many people at this level have graduated from vocationally-oriented programmes. An increase of over 6 million people would imply on average close to 0.5% annual growth. The largest growth is expected in Spain and Portugal at around 4%, two countries with relatively low proportions of their labour force having medium level qualifications (see chart). The Czech Republic is expected to remain the country with the highest relative proportion of the labour force with medium level education.
- Almost all EU countries should expect to see a contraction in their labour force supply of people with low level qualifications (up to lower secondary education; ISCED 0 to 2). Overall 17 million fewer adults in this category are expected to be available for work in 2020. Despite a large drop, Portugal is expected to remain the country with the highest relative proportion of the labour force with low qualifications.

### Links:

Publication: "Future Skill Supply in Europe, Medium-Term Forecast up to 2020, Synthesis Report"  
[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/publication\\_details.asp?pub\\_id=546](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=546)

Skills Needs project:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Projects\\_Networks/skillsnet/default.asp](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Projects_Networks/skillsnet/default.asp)

Conference website:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/agora/skills2009/>

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### About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training.

[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)