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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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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 here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/20448.aspx>

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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)

