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## PRESS RELEASE

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### NEETs – prevention is better than cure

Cedefop Director James Calleja told a conference organised by the European Commission and the Romanian government in Bucharest that ‘in addressing NEETs (people not in employment, education or training) we should keep in mind that prevention is better than cure and that detecting potential NEETs should be a key concern in school education.’

He said that Cedefop also ‘has a role in reducing NEETs through evidence-based research, analysis of Member States’ initiatives as well as support to the Commission on related issues’.

The conference (10-11 March) was addressed by Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta and several ministers.

In his presentation, Mr Calleja delved into the importance of European tools, work-based learning, apprenticeship programmes as well as the use of funding from the European Social Fund and Erasmus+.



He noted: ‘NEETs are the result of various factors, which can be prevented by our educational systems if more attention is given to individuals as early as possible at school. Prevention may be perceived as an expensive activity but

remedial action is even more expensive and no one should expect that vocational education and training (VET) on its own, as a sector, can resolve unemployment issues. Reskilling after school education should not, in principle, include the acquisition of basic skills and competences.'

Several Member States have taken strategic initiatives to reduce NEETs and those that have been successful (such as Ireland, France and Finland) have accomplished this through approaches at micro-levels on national, regional and local contexts.

Mr Calleja argued that 'EU policies, guidelines and roadmaps can only be effective if Member States create the social, educational and work environment, which recognises all skills and competences (validation) and consider the European tools (Europass, EQF, EURES, ESCO and ECVET) as the means to add value and visibility to VET.'

He added that 'linking education to the labour market in flexible, attractive and innovative approaches empowers youths, who we term as the "lost" generation, to re-enter the lifelong learning process.' This can be done through 'reforms in apprenticeship programmes, work-based learning, acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, and validation of acquired skills from informal and non-formal learning.'

Cedefop's expert Irene Psifidou reinforced earlier comments by Mr Calleja in showing that successful policies in Member States to attract and retain young people in education and training had been based around partnerships between schools, VET institutions, employers and social partners.

'We need such partnerships to commit resources to reduce and hopefully eliminate NEETs. Action at the micro-level is the next step towards a sustainable solution. Only initiatives at regional and local levels can bring the desired results,' concluded Mr Calleja.

### Acronyms

EQF: European qualifications framework

EURES: European job mobility portal

ESCO: European classification of skills/competences, qualifications and occupations

ECVET: European credit system for VET

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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)

