



Thessaloniki, 20 March 2014

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Skill deficits do not cause unemployment;
Europe's most talented workforce is being wasted**

Unemployment in many European Union (EU) countries is alarmingly high. Yet, surveys still find that firms have problems filling vacancies. [Manpower's 2013 talent shortage survey](#) found on average more than 25% of firms across 17 Member States reported recruitment difficulties. Many argue that this is because young graduates and other workers are ill-prepared and the lack of the right skills is responsible for Europe's high rates of unemployment.

But in most EU countries labour shortages are well below pre-crisis levels. Job vacancies in 15 Member States in 2013 were 25% fewer than in 2008. Due to weak employment demand people are accepting jobs which do not match their qualification level. In the EU, around 29% of highly-qualified workers are in jobs usually requiring medium- to low-level qualifications.

Consequently, according to Cedefop, while some firms have recruitment difficulties for some jobs, such as ICT developers, rather than a lack of skills evidence points to other factors such as poor wages and working conditions and lack of mobility being mostly responsible for high unemployment coexisting with unfilled job vacancies. With an oversupply of highly-qualified job candidates, firms also prefer to wait for the perfect applicant. The 2013 Manpower study found only 7% of employers willing to redefine recruitment criteria. Firms tend to overlook possible candidates from outside the area as well as young people, women and older workers, many of whom are skilled.

The European economy currently has around two million vacancies. But in 2012, around 20% of the EU's total labour force – some 46 million people – was unemployed or underemployed. The World Economic Forum published [a paper on skill mismatch to which Cedefop contributed](#). It points out that job creation is fundamental but all aspects of skill mismatch must be addressed.

Efforts to bring education and training and the labour market closer together should be reinforced. Employed and unemployed adults need to develop their skills throughout working life. Firms must invest in learning for their workforce. But firms also need to review recruitment practices, extend training strategies and broaden recruitment pools. If not we may only prolong the jobs crisis.

More in the Cedefop briefing note [Skill mismatch: more than meets the eye](#)

The briefing note is available in nine languages (Spanish, German, Greek, English, French, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese) and in two formats (pdf or e-book optimised for tablets and smartphones).

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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

