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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On the road to reform: European VET on Cedefop's 40th anniversary

Vocational education and training (VET) reform is opening up new routes for people into employment and for enterprises to develop the skills of their workforce to compete. However, reform still has some way to go for VET to meet 21st century expectations. But progress is being made, argues Cedefop Director James Calleja* on the occasion of the European agency's 40th anniversary.

Cedefop's anniversary theme is *Old roots for new routes*. 'The old roots of established European VET systems must provide new routes to jobs and careers' says Mr Calleja, 'but implementing change can be difficult. The idea behind our anniversary theme is to encourage continued improvement, by looking at progress Europe has already made. Less than 20 years ago the current extent of European cooperation in VET was unimaginable'.



Mr Calleja points out that the European Commission, EU Member States and social partners are working together to bring VET closer to labour market needs, make systems more flexible, encourage mobility for learning and working, and increase participation of adults in lifelong learning. 'This cooperation is substantially changing VET,' he adds.

More young people now stay on in education and training to at least upper secondary

level. The EU is on course to meet its target of reducing early school leaving to an average of 10% by 2020. By 2025, around 40% of the EU workforce will have a tertiary level qualification.

In a video message to mark Cedefop's 40th anniversary Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility agrees, adding: 'We must further reinforce the link between training and labour market needs to reduce skills mismatch and ensure that such programmes act as a bridge to work. We must also do more to increase attractiveness of VET so that it becomes first choice – not a second option.'

Based in Thessaloniki, Greece, Cedefop continues to play an important role in strengthening European cooperation to develop VET policy. Its analyses of VET systems and policies are highly valued and Cedefop is recognised as a leading centre of expertise on qualifications frameworks and skills forecasting.

It is also beneficial for its host city as Mayor Yiannis Boutaris explains in his message: 'Cedefop's presence has given the city an opportunity to open up, to welcome people from other places, to experience new things and finally acquire a cosmopolitan feel that goes beyond the practical effects of having an international organisation based here.'

'Cedefop is very relevant to the challenges Europe faces today in terms of youth employment and developing skills for a strong and lasting economic recovery,' says Mr Calleja, concluding: 'We must continue the work to ensure that people and enterprises benefit directly from VET reform.'

** Cedefop Director James Calleja is available for interviews on the occasion of the agency's 40th anniversary. Please contact the Press Office.*

Notes to editors

- Cedefop's Founding Regulation was published on 10 February 1975.
- The agency's first home was in West Berlin, West Germany.
- Cedefop was set up with the aim to assist the [European] Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training.
- In 1995, Cedefop moved from Berlin to its current base in Thessaloniki.

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Contact

Press Office: Rosy Voudouri

Tel: +30 2310 490012, e-mail: rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu

Department contact: Steve Bainbridge

Tel: +30 2310 490029, e-mail: steve.bainbridge@cedefop.europa.eu

Head of Area Communication, Information and Dissemination: Gerd Oskar Bausewein

Tel: +30 2310 490288, e-mail: gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu

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

