



PRESS RELEASE

MEPs explore closer cooperation with Cedefop

Ideas for closer cooperation between Cedefop and the European Parliament, as well as national representations, were explored during a two-day visit (10-11 February) to the EU agency of a delegation of the parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL).

MEPs Kostadinka Kuneva from Greece and Jutta Steinruck from Germany (committee members), and Pieter Rook of the Committee Secretariat had meetings with Cedefop Director James Calleja, Deputy Director Mara Brugia, heads of departments and several experts who presented the agency's work.

Both MEPs mentioned the need for Cedefop to be able to work more closely with Member State governments and parliaments, and offered their services to this purpose.



Ms Kuneva said that the visit helped her understand the important work carried out by Cedefop's management and staff: 'This work helps us all realise the big labour market changes and seek the appropriate tools and policies in a Europe rocked by unemployment.'

She added that Cedefop offers relevant knowledge, methodology and an analytical approach to the Member State governments who seek substantial, not superficial, solutions to unemployment.

The Greek MEP wondered why Cedefop is not utilised more by governments and public employment services, adding that they should make use of the agency's studies on apprenticeship, skills and early leaving from education and training.

Ms Steinruck said that Cedefop needs to be more visible in Member States since a lot of work has to be done at national and local levels.

She expressed her appreciation of Cedefop's work, which feeds into the work the Committee undertakes from time to time. The German MEP said contacts with the European Parliament should be intensified and more resources should be allocated to the agency to enable it to fulfil its mandate. In times of unemployment, with skill needs to be addressed, the role of Cedefop is becoming increasingly important.

Ms Steinruck added: 'Cedefop represents an important source of knowledge and information, which could shed new light on the prevailing issues Europe's unemployed and low-skilled adults face when challenged by the demands of the labour market.' In a reference to the digital economy, she pointed out that skills development has to be at the forefront and Cedefop could advise on vocational education and training (VET) reform and the social partners' role.

In his address, Mr Calleja indicated that in the short and medium term, Cedefop will be working closely with Member States and social partners to ensure VET reform in line with European policies and priorities based on national labour market needs.

The [Riga conclusions](#) and Europe's education and training 2020 targets govern Cedefop's work programme 2016 and programming document 2017-20: 'Working closely with the Commission and the European Parliament enables us to reach policy-makers and European citizens more effectively,' concluded Mr Calleja.

The two sides agreed to follow up their meetings and work closer together in the context of the EMPL Committee.

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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

