

The Changing role and nature of VET in Europe

**Austrian Presidency conference: 'The future of vocational
education and training in Europe'**

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COMPETING STORIES – OPPOSING EXPECTATIONS

The negative story

VET is declining and losing out to general and academic education

The skills provided by VET are less in need due to digitalization and job polarization

The positive story

VET is expanding to higher levels and form the backbone of lifelong learning

The skills provided by VET are essential for continued economic growth and for upholding welfare



THE CHANGING NATURE AND ROLE OF VET IN EUROPE-PROJECT

A need to “take one step back” and critically assess developments in vocational education and training in Europe today. We do this

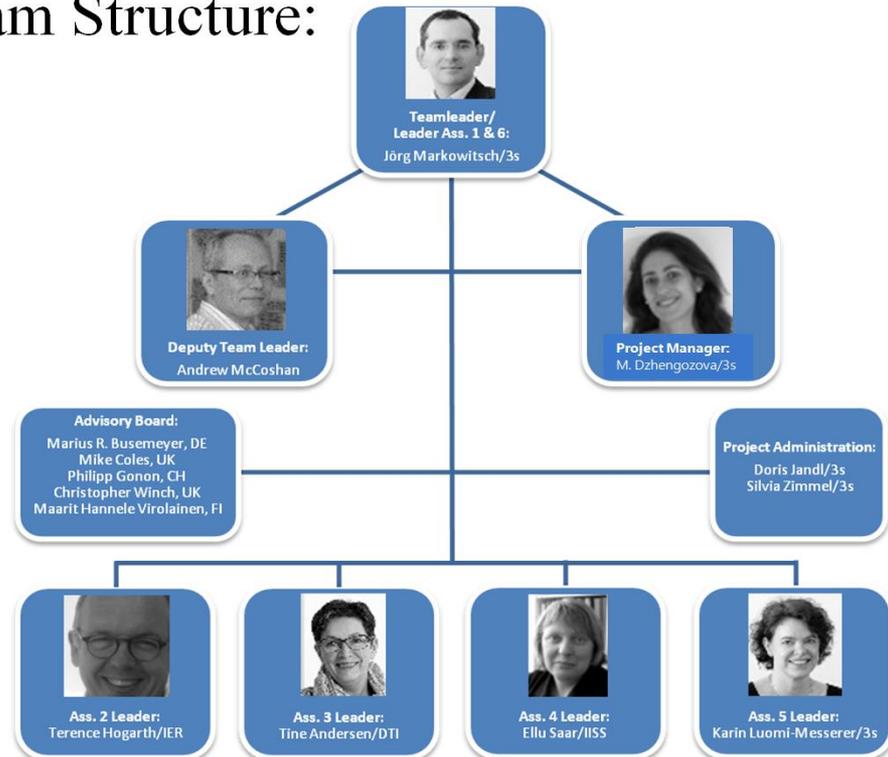
- by looking back; how VET in the EU28 + Iceland and Norway has changed since the early 1990s
- by looking forward and by developing scenarios which will help us illustrate directions of travel and choices implied

A three year project ending December 2018. Cedefop will build on this work during 2019 and 2020, feeding into future European cooperation on VET

CEDEFOP'S RESEARCH PARTNERS

- A core team from, Austria (3S), Denmark (DTI), Estonia (Tallinn University), Italy (FGB) and the UK (IES)
- More than 100 national experts from 30 countries

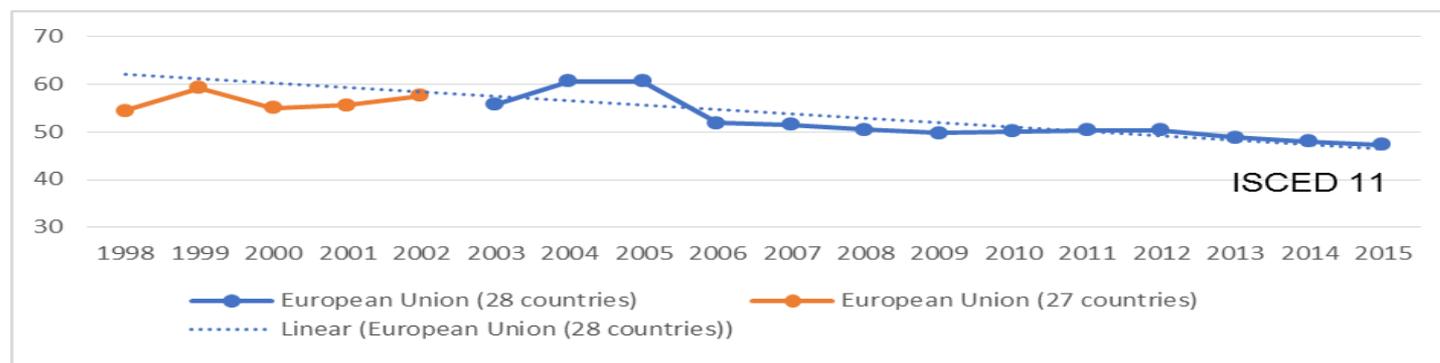
Team Structure:



‘THE HEARTLAND’ – Initial vocational education and training (EQF 3-4)

Declining VET?

Aggregate European statistics indicate that VET is declining



From an absolute top in 2005 of 60,7%, the proportion of upper secondary students attending VET declined to 47% in 2015. A downward trend can be detected since 2005.

NATIONAL NUMBERS

Going back to national statistics, and reconstructing developments over the period, developments stand out as diverse:

- Remarkable growth in some countries (Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Greece) although from a low base.
- Significant or moderate decline in some countries (Germany, France, UK), although from a high base.
- We can observe moderate growth, from a medium/high level in some countries (Austria Finland, Netherlands, Sweden)
- In the majority of European countries we observe growth or stability.

A few big countries influence the aggregated numbers but in a majority of countries IVET upholds its relative position relative to general upper secondary education.



Diversity of delivery

European IVET is impressively diverse:

- The majority of European VET students follow a school based approach to VET – with varying input of practise based learning
- A significant majority of VET students follow a dual, apprenticeship-based model
- A tendency that systems move in a lifelong learning direction; combining diverse approaches allowing adults to participate
- We observe pluralistic developments where dominating delivery models are complemented by alternative forms of learning
- Diversity has increased in the two decades covered by the study.



NATIONAL CONTROL AND EUROPEAN/INTERNATIONAL CONVERGENCES

VET is very much a national responsibility. Compared to higher education (Bologna process), only limited harmonization of institutional structures and qualifications have taken place.

- Ensures local, regional and national adaptation and relevance
- Risks a 'lock in effect' where sub-optimal solutions are chosen and pursued

In the last two decades, cooperation and mutual learning has increased significantly (underlining the success of the Copenhagen process) pointing to a series of converging tendencies directly influencing national policies and practises.

CHANGING IVET SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

1995	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision often fragmented, strong links to industries and sectors, weaker to overall education and training systems • Dead-end programmes, restricted to medium levels with little progression to higher levels • VET narrowly defined as IVET • VET addressing a narrowly defined target group (16-20 year olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More coherent VET systems integrated within the overall education and training systems • Increased permeability and fewer dead-ends • More centralised standards setting • Fewer qualifications and broadened profiles • Diversification of target groups, including adults

CHANGING CONTENT AND PEDAGOGICS

1995	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET and general education conceptually distinct • Work-based learning underdeveloped outside apprenticeship systems • Much school based IVET 'input driven' and weakly linked to labour market • Programmes and qualifications narrowly defined and specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing of boundaries (school-workplace; general-vocational) • Increased work-based learning in all IVET forms • A reorientation to learning outcomes and competences • More flexibility in time and place of learning; increased acceptance of prior learning

CHANGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

1995	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited goals; preparing for job entry and securing skilled labour• Industry and sector based standard setting and anticipation of needs• Jobs requiring medium level skills dominate in the labour market• Digitalization one of several factors influencing VET	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broader goals – social as well as economic; excellence as well as integration• Increasing role of skills intelligence systems• Jobs requiring middle-levels skills starting to decline; future developments contested• Digitalization a key-driving force

**Moving into new territories –
continuing and higher vocational
education and training**

VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT HIGHER LEVELS (EQF 5-8)

A broadening conception of VET; not limited to the vocational part of upper secondary education and training, but increasingly seen as an important part of education and training at all levels:

- VET at post-secondary level (EQF 5) has significantly increased in importance
- A tendency ('vocational drift') to introduce more practice and work based elements in existing HE/University courses
- Most countries uphold a binary HE-sector with a clear role given to institutions with a vocational and professional orientation
- An emergence of new vocationally oriented institutions outside the traditional HE/University sector



HIGHER VET – ISSUES AND TENSIONS

- Overall a tension between what we may term ‘vocational’ and ‘academic drift’
- Developments points to the need for practice and work based learning at higher levels
- Developments underline the need to better balance theoretical knowledge and practical skills/competences

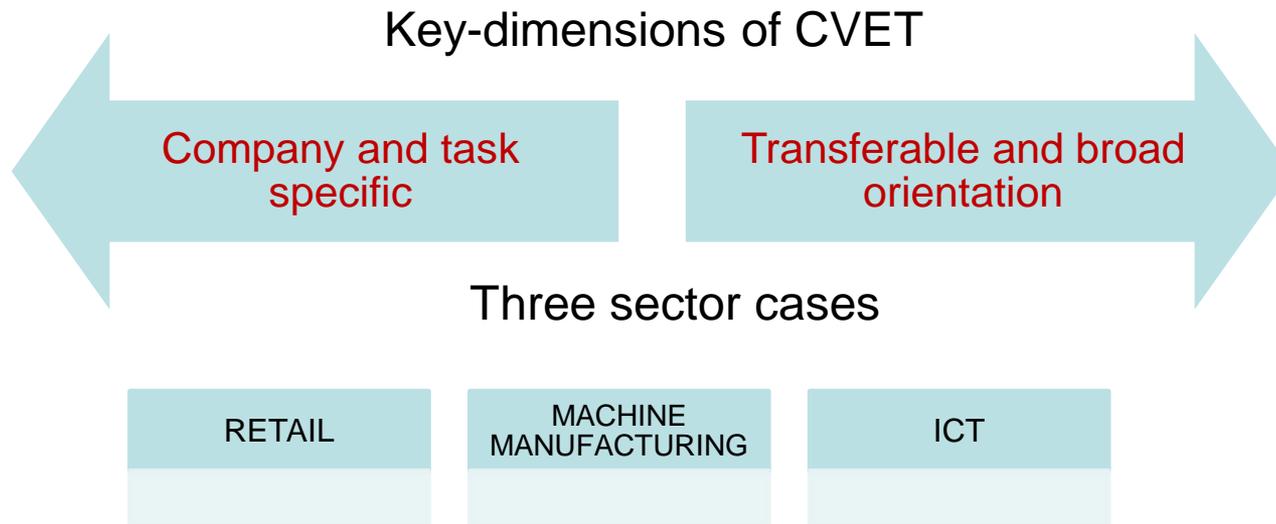
Looking back to the period 1995-2015, the growing importance of HVET is perhaps the most significant change observed. However...

- Developments of HVET requires increased VISIBILITY
- Developments of HVET directly depends on strengthening of permeability, removal of dead- ends.



ADULTS AND VOCATIONAL LEARNING

- Available statistics point to a moderate growth in participation in Continuing VET
- Companies retain their position as key providers of CVET
- Adults participation in IVET significantly increased in some countries

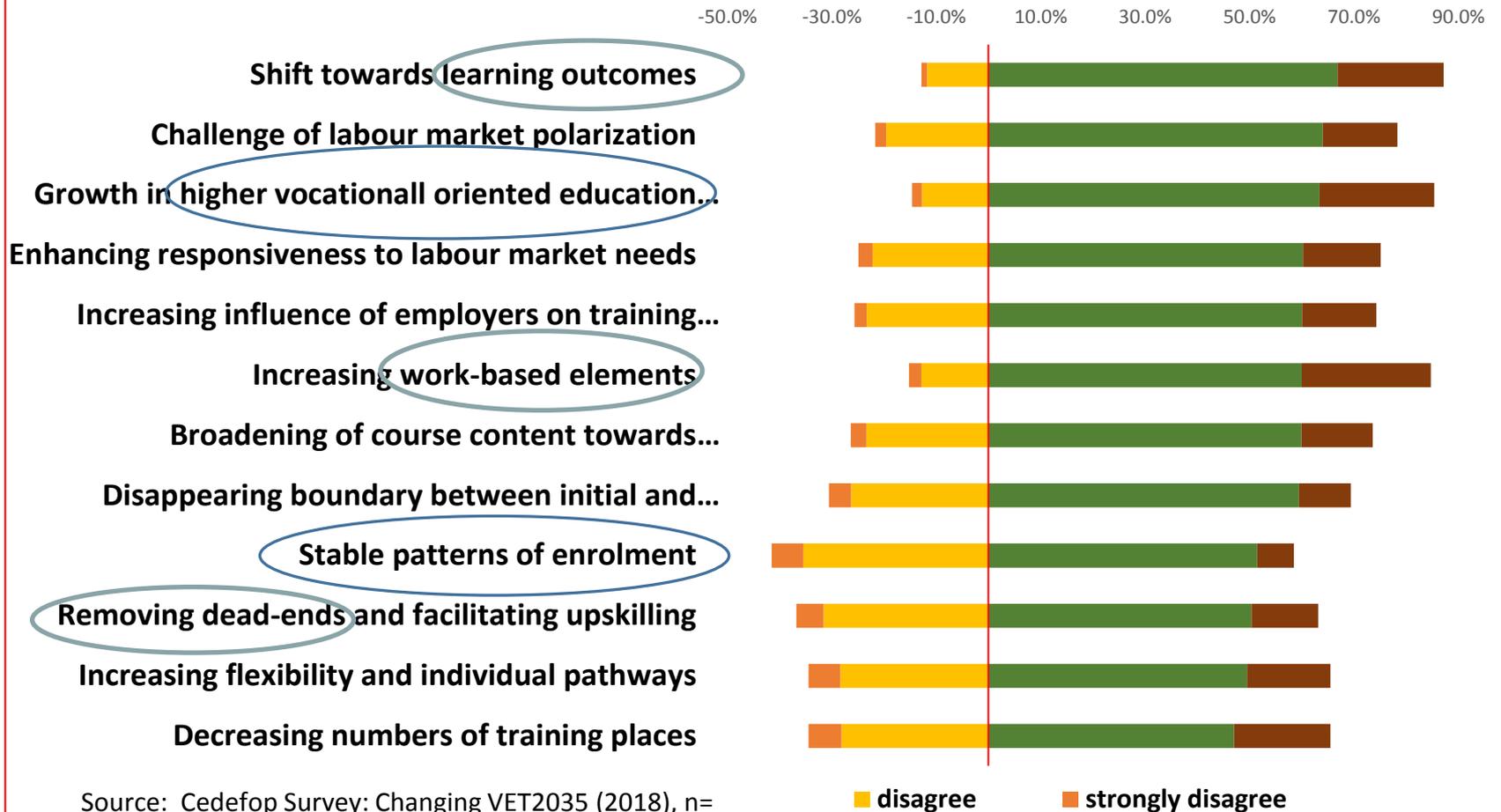


VET-experts and stakeholders views on past and future trends

Based on 1308 responses to survey carried out April-June 2018

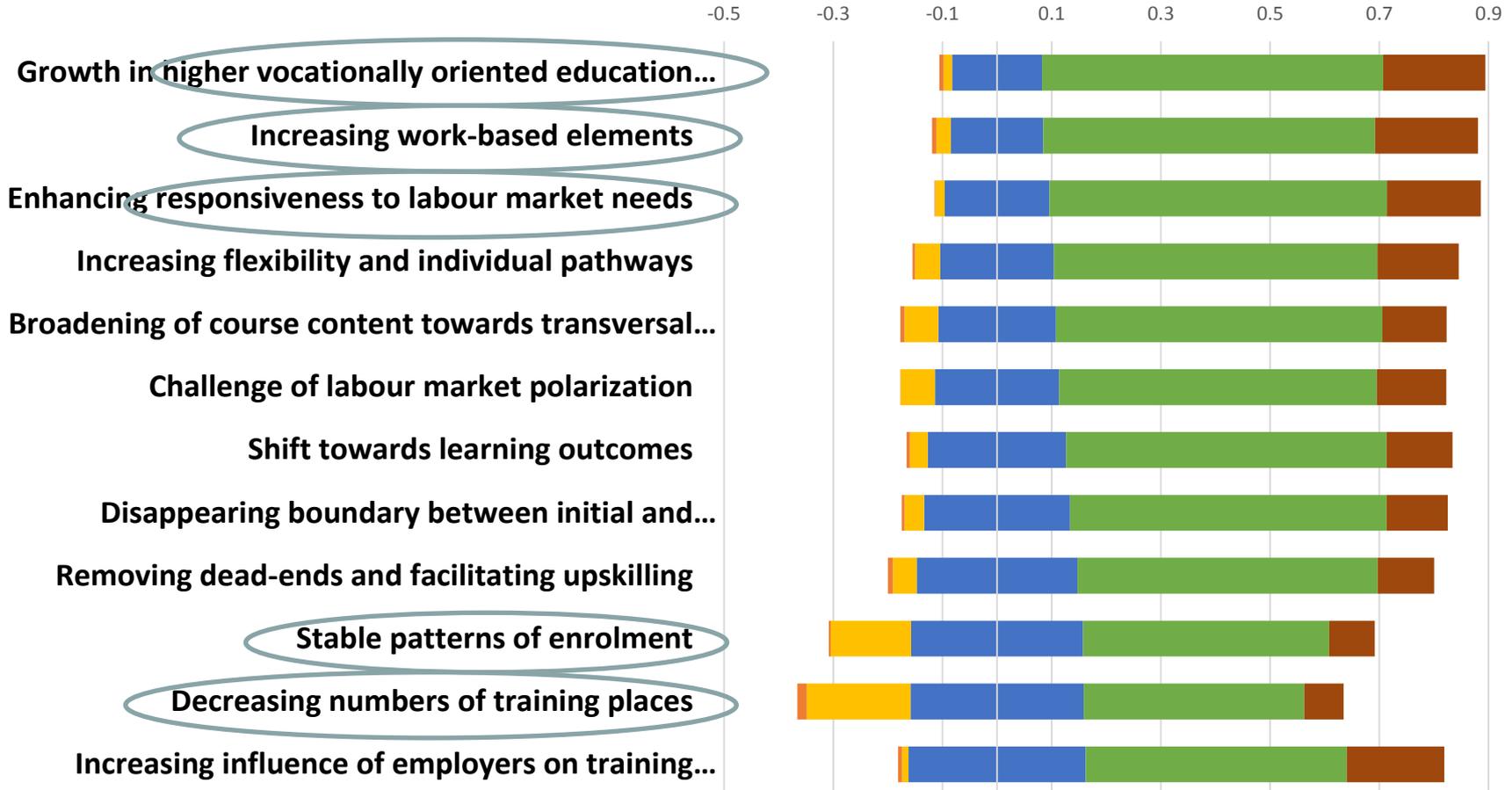


Past trends: 1995-2015



Source: Cedefop Survey: Changing VET2035 (2018), n=1184-1283

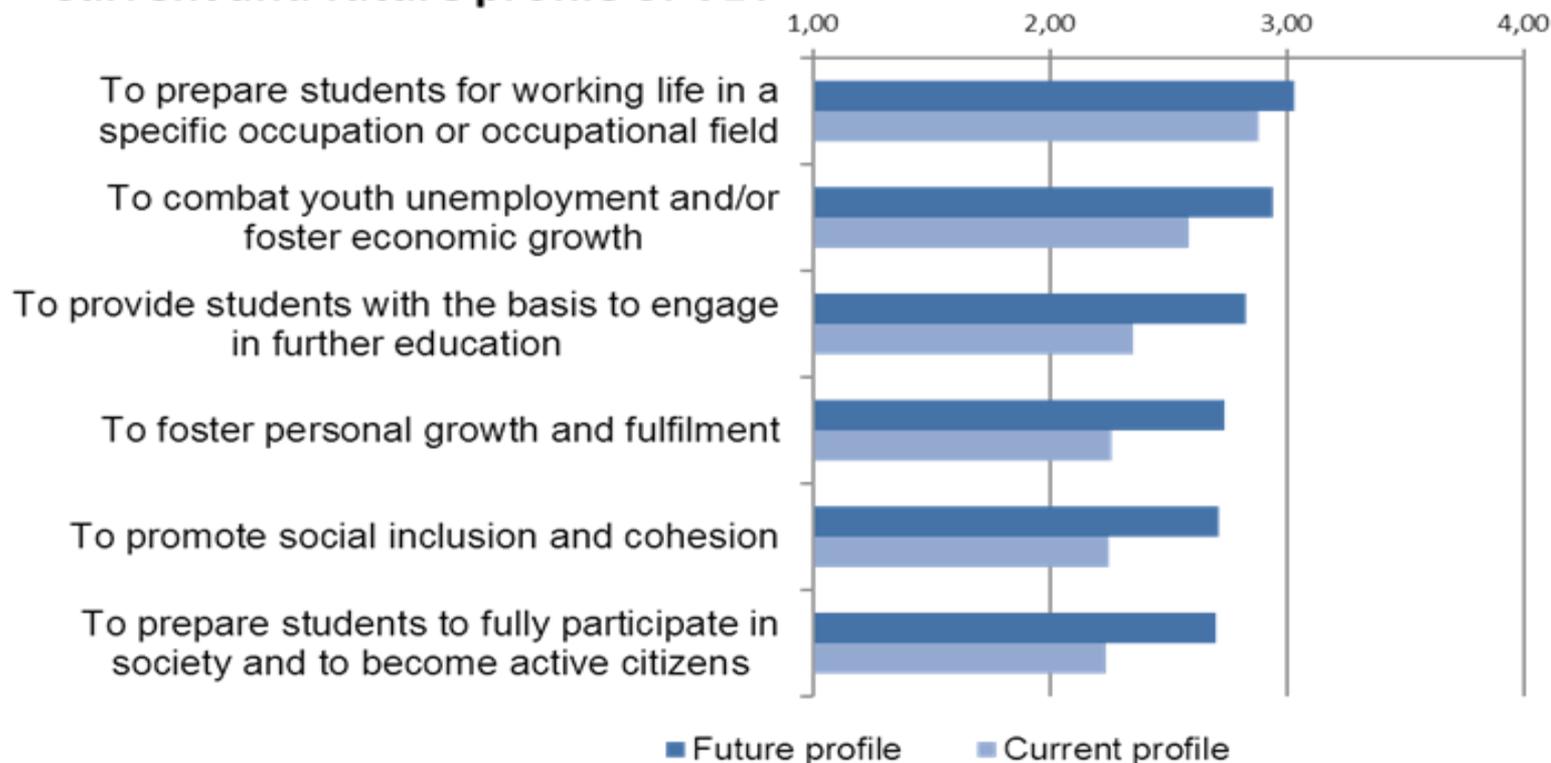
Future trends: 2035



Source: Cedefop Survey: Changing VET2035 (2018), n= 1183-1306

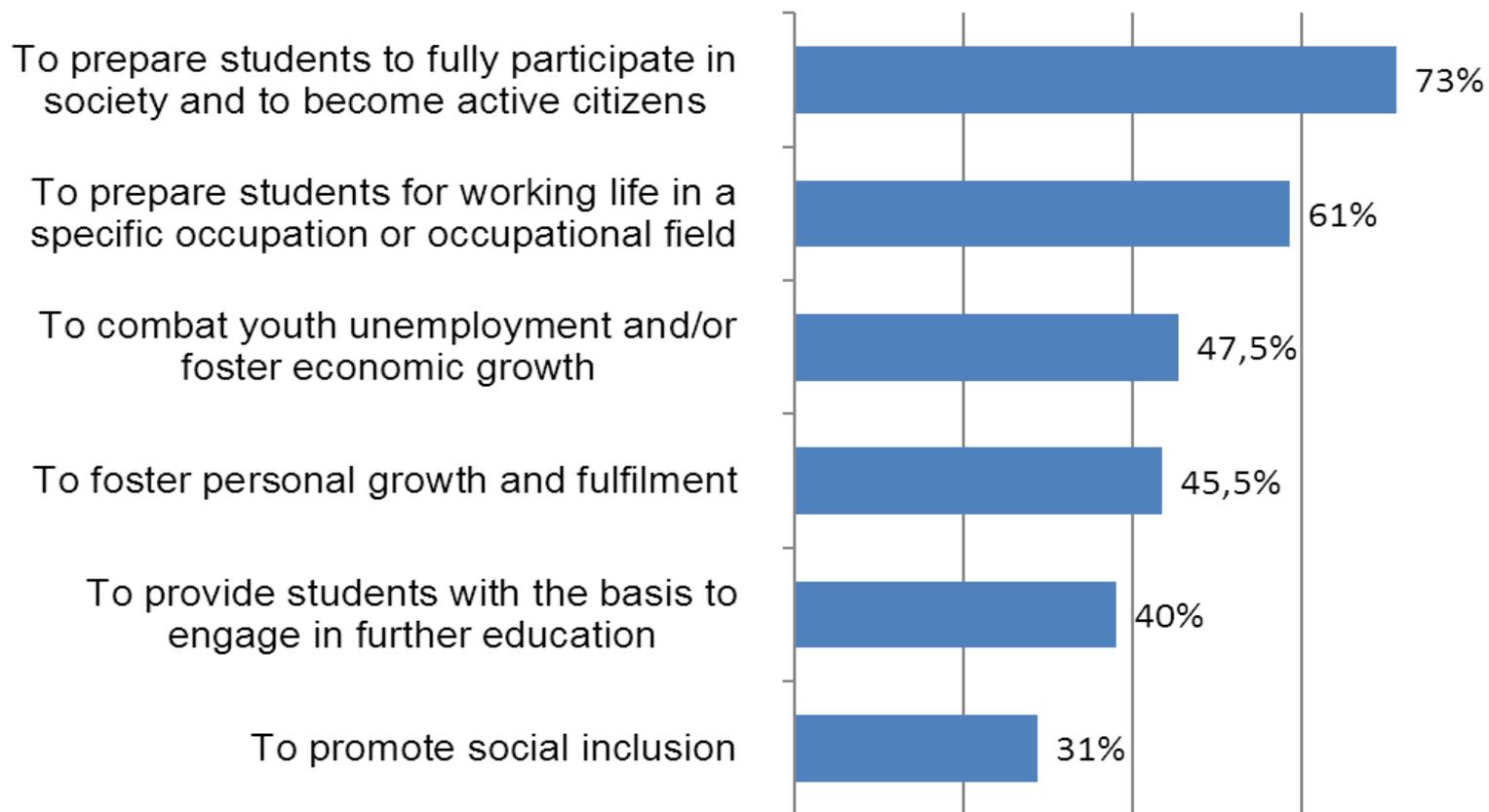
strongly decrease decrease

Current and future profile of VET



Source: Cedefop Survey: Changing VET2035 (2018), n= 1263-1308; 1=not at all; 4=to a large extent

Desired VET profile



Source: Cedefop Survey, Changing VET2035 (2018), n= 1308 Multiple answer question

DIRECTIONS OF TRAVEL AND IMPLICATIONS OF THESE



DIRECTIONS OF TRAVEL – THE DISTINCTIVE MODEL

The position of VET in the wider education and training system?	VET organised around professions, clearly distinguished from other forms of education by its close relationship to enterprises and sectors
Who is VET for?	Focus is on professional entry, associated with medium to high-skilled professions
What type of pathways?	Work based learning and apprenticeships have high status and stands out as the 'gold standard'
What type of provision?	Employer led provisions
How is VET understood?	VET is understood as a clearly defined sub-sector consisting of clearly defined institutions. The keyword: a modernised version of 'vocational training'



DIRECTIONS OF TRAVEL – A PLURALISTIC MODEL

The position of VET in the wider education and training system?

While having closer links to the labour market, VET is moving closer to other parts of education

Who is VET for?

Increasing diversity of target groups; covering lower levels as well as medium and higher levels

What type of pathways?

Numerous VET pathways operate side by side; school and work based pathways have the same status and is mixed pragmatically

What type of provision?

Widening variety of providers

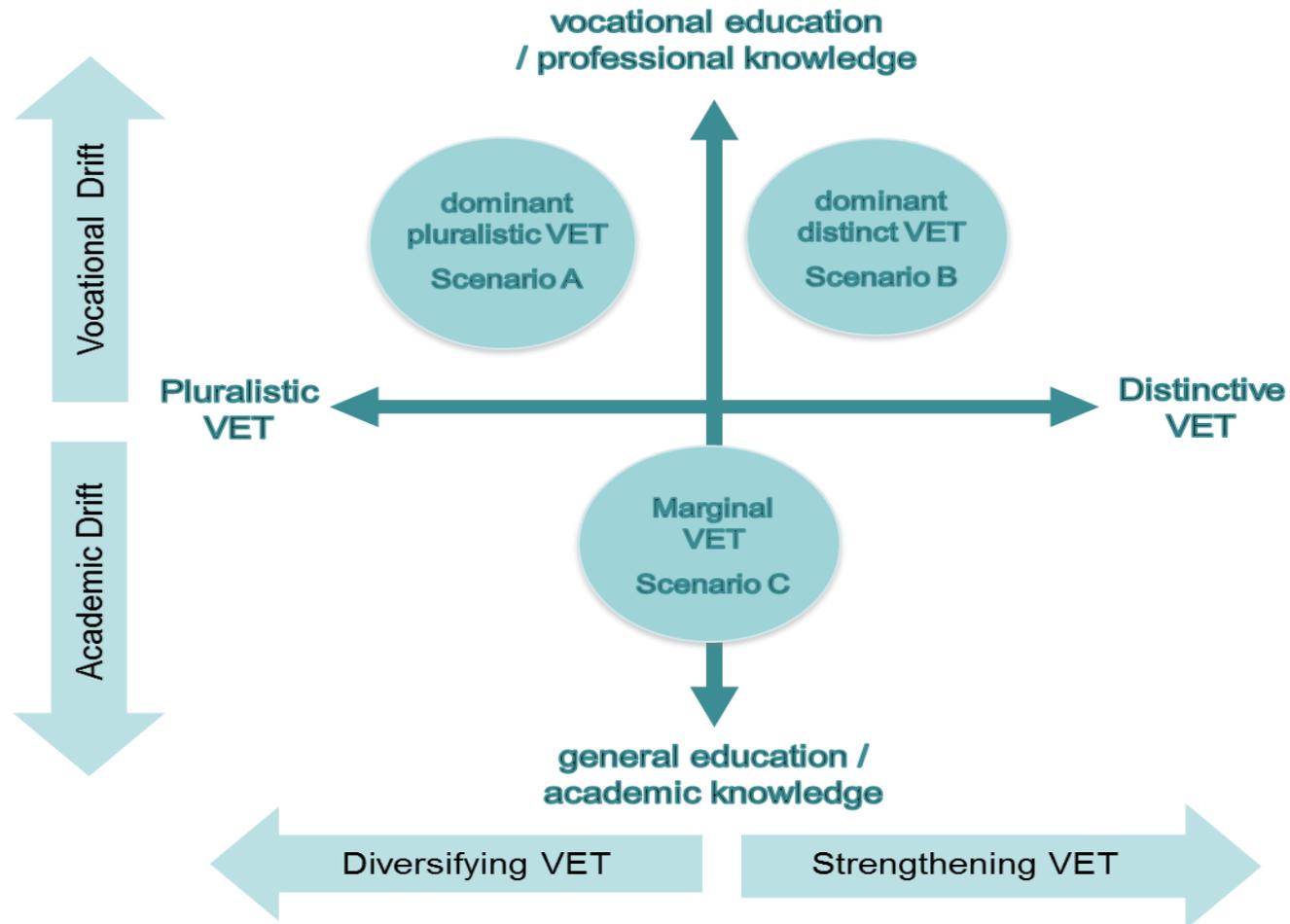
How is VET understood?

VET is understood as a feature and function, not a particular set of institutions. VET is relevant to all levels and types of education ,training and learning.

The key word: Towards vocationally oriented learning



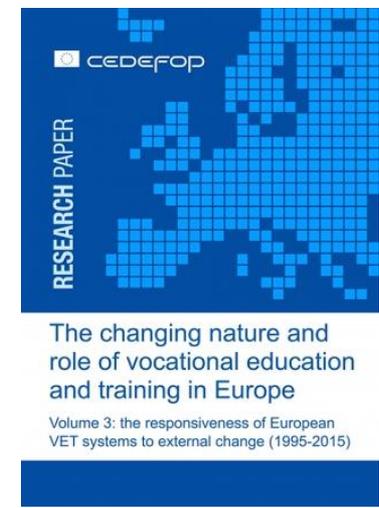
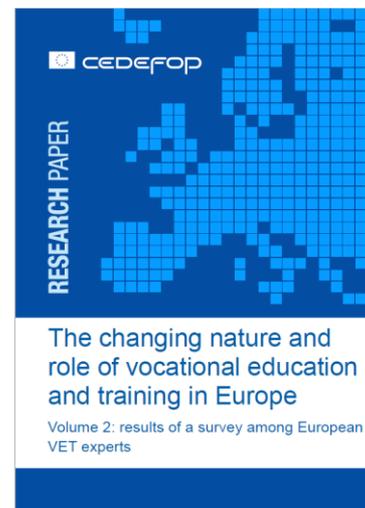
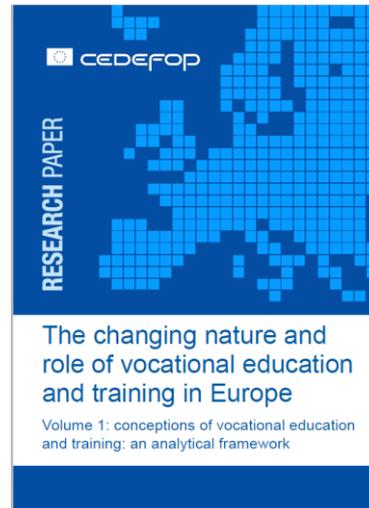
A SCENARIO MODEL



A catalyst for reflection and development

- Final conference
November 7-8
2018
- Visit the project web-page:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/changing-nature-and-role-vocational-education-and-training-vet-europe>



Thank you for your attention!

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