



# from past to future



*Future policy cooperation should focus on how education and training systems as a whole can promote and support practice-oriented and work-related learning*



Cedefop's research project on the changing nature and role of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe (2016-18) is at the centre of a debate about VET's future. By analysing developments in the sector over the past two decades, it is able to examine current challenges and to point to future opportunities.

The project focuses on a range of issues relevant to VET's development: its changing definition and conceptualisation; the external drivers influencing VET developments; the role of traditional VET at upper secondary level; and VET from a lifelong learning perspective and at higher education levels. In the final project phase, scenarios outlining alternative progress paths for European VET in the 21st century will be presented.

Cedefop asked experts in the 30 countries covered by the project to share their views of

how national VET systems are perceived and are changing. The results of this survey offer an insight into the diversity of national VET solutions, while also pointing to common trends and shared challenges.

The project looks at VET from a multifaceted viewpoint, combining a system/institution perspective with both pedagogical/epistemological and socioeconomic/labour market perspectives. This makes it possible to observe how vocationally oriented learning forms and formats are spreading, and how a closer link to the labour market is developing, including in institutions not traditionally defined as vocational.

Various issues have to be addressed regarding future European cooperation in vocational education and training. The traditional distinction between education and training subsectors (general, vocational and higher education, initial and continuing VET) is not always practical when it comes to identifying and responding to new challenges.

By operating on the basis of too narrow a definition of VET, policy-makers risk overlooking the need for vocationally oriented education outside the traditional VET sector. Future policy cooperation should focus on how education and training systems as a whole can promote and support practice-oriented and work-related learning. VET development may also require solutions spanning several subsectors and involving institutions and providers currently operating alone. ■

Find out  
more about  
Cedefop's project



The changing nature  
and role of vocational  
education and training  
in Europe

