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Skill forecasts are important tools for policy, but there is room for improvement

An international group of research and labour market experts found that Cedefop's skill forecasts are a useful indicator of how the supply and demand for skills is developing in the EU labour market.

The experts were participating in a technical conference organised by Cedefop (Thessaloniki 17-18 February 2011) focusing on the relevance, uses and possible improvements to the agency's medium-term skills forecasts.

Cedefop's work on skills has contributed significantly to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, one of the flagship initiatives of the European Union's new strategy for sustainable growth and jobs, *Europe 2020*. The purpose of this initiative is to increase labour market participation and ensure a better match between the demand and supply of skills across Europe.

Cedefop called on the experts to help improve its methods and tools for skills forecasting, and report on national or sectoral uses of the forecast studies. All conference participants agreed that further improvements were needed to ensure quality and relevance. The invited experts examined the consistency of Cedefop's methods and tools and compared them with various national approaches. They also proposed adjustments and suggested ideas for the future development of the forecasts. The existence of reliable [national] data was considered the key limitation (or main impediment) in making projections for the future.

At the conference, Cedefop announced its latest update of the 2010 forecast. The latest labour market statistics prove Cedefop's forecast of 2010 to be fairly accurate. Some minor discrepancies were due to the impact of the economic crisis on the labour market: it turned out to be less harsh than had been anticipated at the beginning of 2010.

More information

1. **Conference website**
<http://events.cedefop.europa.eu/skills2011/>
2. **Cedefop Briefing note: What next for skills on the European labour market?**
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17783.aspx>

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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