



Thessaloniki 29 February 2012

For immediate release

[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

## Underinvestment in green skills raises concerns

For many companies in the environmental field, the current crisis means easier access to qualified workers. This situation encourages firms to cut back training for green skills. But without long-term investment, particularly in science and technology training, employers may soon experience a shortage of people with the right skills. In fact, countries with low unemployment are already facing such shortages. The potential repercussions for the European economy and labour market are serious.

A forthcoming Cedefop publication suggests this outcome can be avoided if, among other measures, countries integrate skills strategies into their environment and energy policies.

**Skills for a Low Carbon Economy:****what next?**

27 FEB. 2012 | PARIS, FRANCE



Cedefop has found that despite the role of policy and regulation in influencing demand for green skills, most Member States do not yet integrate national skill strategies with their environment policies. This means environmental goals are not sufficiently backed up by education and training.

### What policy-makers can do

The study suggests policy makers should focus on encouraging close **cooperation** between employers, training providers and workers; developing **cohesive** policies; and ensuring the provision of guidance and career **counselling** to make green jobs more attractive.

The Cedefop study covers all educational levels – from nanotechnologists to recycling collectors – in eight EU countries (Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia and the UK) representing various stages of developing a sustainable economy. The main findings were presented at the [OECD/Cedefop Green Skills Forum](#) in Paris on 27 February 2012.

### What the green economy means for employment

Opening the Forum, Pascaline Descy, Head of Research and Policy Analysis, spelled out the potential for employment. 'Between 2005 and 2009', she said, 'it is estimated that the renewable energy sector generated 220 000 additional jobs. If the EU reaches the objectives set for sustainable growth in the Europe 2020 strategy, the potential for job creation in Europe is over a million new jobs. But these cannot be covered only by fresh graduates – it is imperative to retrain workers, especially as part of the process of restructuring.'



Pascaline Descy

### **A negative image among women and the young**

Demographic decline and the gender gap in these fields mean that too few people are acquiring the necessary high qualifications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Low-skilled jobs in the sector suffer from a negative image. According to Cedefop's Antonio Ranieri, 'national policies on increasing green skills in vocational education and training need to deal with the fact that among two crucial groups - young people and women - green jobs are not considered desirable.'



Antonio Ranieri

### **Lack of clarity on regulations and qualifications**

Cedefop's Grethe Haugoy adds: 'Uncertainty about regulations isn't helping the situation – and regulation is a dominant factor, driving both employers and private consumers to demand energy-efficient technology, products and services.'



Grethe Haugoy

The study of green skills also reveals problems with the recognition of qualifications and prior knowledge. In many countries, green jobs are new and their qualification pathways not yet recognised. As a result, companies may not know how and where to find the right people for the job – even within their own country.

The Green Skills Forum draws on work conducted by the OECD, Cedefop and other organisations on the implications of the green economy for training policies. It examines (1) what firms, trade unions and other organisations are already doing to foster green growth through skills development; (2) how strategies for green skills are integrated with other areas of workforce development and (3) tools and directions for further research. These insights will contribute to the [OECD's Green Growth Strategy](#) studies, such as the LEED projects on [Measuring the Potential of Green Growth](#) and [Improving the effectiveness of green local development initiatives](#), and to [Cedefop's Green Skills activities](#), which contribute to the European Commission's initiative on [New Skills for New Jobs](#).

### **More information:**

#### **Cedefop briefing note: A strategy for green skills?**

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/19538.aspx>

#### **Information on the Forum**

<https://events.cedefop.europa.eu/GreenSkills-Forum2012>

###

### **Contact**

Press Officer

**Ioáanna Nezi**, tel. +30 2310 490186, E-Mail: [ioanna.nezi@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:ioanna.nezi@cedefop.europa.eu)

Head of Communication, Information and Dissemination

**Gerd Oskar Bausewein**, tel. +30 2310 490288, E-Mail: [gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto: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](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)



Stay connected to Cedefop via social media