

Conclusions

Cedefop held a seminar on *Empowering vulnerable adults to tackle labour-market challenges*, in Thessaloniki on 6-7 June 2012. The seminar summarised the findings of 25 study visits organised in the academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12. It focused on ways to support vulnerable adults to overcome the challenges they face, to exploit their knowledge, skills and competences to the full, to participate in vocational training, to recognise their skills and competences and finally to have access to meaningful and rewarding employment.

The event brought together 40 organisers and participants of study visits, representatives of initiatives identified during visits as examples of good practice, experts on the themes and representatives of the study visits national agencies. Participants had relevant experience and substantial expertise in areas contributing to the labour market integration of vulnerable groups at local, regional, national and European levels. They were directors of education and vocational training institutions, educational and vocational training inspectors, head teachers, teacher trainers, directors of guidance centres, representatives of the chambers of commerce, directors of validation/ accreditation centres from different European countries participating in the study visits programme.

Summarising around 25 visits in 2010/11 and 2011/12, presentations from 19 countries emphasized how policy-makers across Europe can help vulnerable adults to:

- receive individualised services - information, guidance and counseling. Practitioners directly working with vulnerable adults should receive appropriate training;
- be involved in the design, development, delivery, management and evaluation of services meant for them;
- have their skills acquired abroad recognised giving them access to high-skilled occupations, and generally making better use of their skills in the country where they live;
- increase their participation rates in continuing vocational education and training; groups which traditionally have low participation in training, such as the low-skilled and older workers, should be specifically targeted by such measures;
- encourage them (especially older workers (+55)) to stay in employment. This means they should have access to more opportunities to improve their skills at any stage of working life.

The seminar participants worked together during the seminar to develop a better understanding and solutions to the challenges faced by vulnerable adults (migrants and ethnic minorities, low-skilled and older people) when accessing the labour market. They agreed that all stakeholders – social partners, governments, education and training providers, labour market representatives, civil society organisations – need to be aware of their own responsibilities in supporting vulnerable adults to participate in learning and enter the labour market.