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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Time for action on work-based learning

Participants in Cedefop's conference on tackling skills mismatch agreed that Europe needs to implement policy initiatives on developing work-based learning as an answer to rising youth unemployment.

High-level participants in the two-day conference, which finished on Thursday, included European Union Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androulla Vassiliou, German Parliamentary Secretary of State, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Thomas Rachel and Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris.

In her keynote speech, Ms Vassiliou argued that the risk of a lost generation is 'a real threat' but added that 'at EU-level we are working with the Member States to put Europe back on the road to jobs and growth'.

The Commissioner referred to the upcoming launch of a European Alliance for Apprenticeships as something to be 'proud of' and noted that apprenticeships are 'a win-win situation – employers get to know potential employees, while apprentices directly contribute to the output of the company'.

Ms Vassiliou stressed that 'it will be only by pooling the efforts of EU Member States, social partners, business, other relevant actors and the European Commission that we will be able to develop high-quality apprenticeships across Europe'.

Thomas Rachel called for 'systematic reform' in vocational education and training. He told the conference that 'the dual system is the backbone of Germany's economic success' and that his country wants to support its European partners 'in their reform process'.

In his address, Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris highlighted the importance of vocational education and training, especially in countries like Greece, pointing out that 'the reform should have started before the crisis'.

Cedefop Acting Director Christian Lettmayr said in the conference's closing statement: 'There may be limits to growth but there are no limits to change.'

Cedefop's conference gathered more than 150 experts on vocational education and training from around the world, policy-makers from the European Commission and Member States as well as social partners' representatives.

For more information on these issues: www.cedefop.europa.eu

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Conference pictures are available on request.

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Contact

Press Office: Rosy Voudouri

Tel: +30 2310 490012, e-mail: rosy.voudouri@cedefop.europa.eu

Head of Area Communication, Information and Dissemination: Gerd Oskar Bausewein

Tel: +30 2310 490288, e-mail: 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

