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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Six solutions for effective vocational education and training – proposed by the Cedefop Director

Cedefop Director James Calleja told participants at a conference on skills mobility and competitiveness that there are solutions to the ‘worrying situation with millions of jobs in Europe still remaining vacant while 27 million people are unemployed’.

Mr Calleja addressed particularly the issue of youth unemployment, saying that it is up to 23 % – in some countries even hitting the 60 % mark.



‘This is an issue, which will be picked up again in this particular city next year because Thessaloniki will be European Youth Capital, and I think it will be particularly appropriate for us as an EU agency to really focus on

this,’ he noted in his speech at the conference organised by the European Economic and Social Committee’s Labour Market Observatory.

According to Mr Calleja, ‘we have a choice here: we can be technical and, therefore, act as kings; we can be prophets and predict but do nothing about it; and we can be brokers and do something about our own predictions.’

The Cedefop Director talked about six solutions:

- We need to ensure easy access to labour market needs, to counsellors and guidance teachers in schools as early as possible. It’s very important that young people start seeing the labour market in secondary school. They should be seeing qualifications as the end result of compulsory education, but they should see the labour market as an important end result of their general education.
- Forecasting of skills should go hand in hand with qualifications. People need to acquire qualifications. We cannot tolerate people without any formal qualifications anymore. There should be no failures in compulsory education. No one should go into vocational education and training (VET) with zero qualifications.

- Continuous VET and initial VET should be given more importance by all social partners, by industry itself. We should make them more visible, more attractive to young people. It is a solution for unemployment.
- The dialogue with schools, with general education, should be more intensive. VET, higher education and general education should speak to each other more frequently because people ought to acquire skills as early as possible in life. So, the earlier the intervention the better.
- Apprenticeship schemes, work-based learning, workplace learning are all solutions that we have already proposed, and the European Area for Skills and Qualifications, which the Commission has launched, and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships elaborate on these propositions. We need to make them more visible to Member States and to our stakeholders.
- We have to convince more institutions to use the European tools. Universities today have organised themselves in such a way that there is synergy between them across Europe. This is not the case with vocational training, and I think this is a challenge for us. We have a credit system in place, we have a VET quality assurance policy in place, we have Europass. ESCO (classification of European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) was launched a few weeks ago. We have been talking about the learning outcomes approach for quite some time now as well as the validation of informal/non formal learning. All these are tools, which promote employability and give solutions to the need for skills and mobility for competitiveness.

Mr Calleja concluded: 'We should address our messages to everyone; to all learners, to all employees, employers and social partners. Skills and qualifications are a necessity for today's and tomorrow's labour markets.'

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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

